

**GETTING MARRIED TWICE: THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN INDIGENOUS AND  
CHRISTIAN MARRIAGES AMONG THE NDAU OF THE CHIMANIMANI  
AREA OF ZIMBABWE**

by

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## DECLARATION

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I, Elijah Elijah Ngoweni Dube, declare that **Getting married twice: the relationship between indigenous and Christian marriages among the Ndaou of the Chimanimani area of Zimbabwe** is my work and that all sources that have been quoted or referred to have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'E. E. N. Dube', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Mr E. E. N. Dube

Date 13 June 2017

## **DEDICATION**

This thesis is dedicated to all the Ndaou people of Zimbabwe.

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## **Abstract**

The thesis focuses on the Ndaou people of Chimanimani, Zimbabwe. Contact with Westerners brought significant changes to their marriage practices. South Africa General Mission (SAGM) missionaries required Ndaou people to conduct church (“white”) weddings for their marriages to be recognised by the church. This has caused a problem whereby Ndaou Christians marry traditionally/customarily and yet still have to conduct church weddings. The church has not rethought its position on the necessity for having this duplication of marriages. The thesis sought to develop an in-depth understanding of Ndaou people’s perceptions and experiences on the connection between and the necessity for both marriages in Chimanimani, Zimbabwe. Data regarding Ndaou people’s understanding of marriage practices was collected using in-depth semi-structured and focus group interviews.

Following a qualitative research design, the study used the phenomenological approach to collect data and postcolonialism as the research paradigm. Using these, twenty individual and five focus group interviews were conducted. Seven themes emerged from the data. These covered marriage practices of the Ndaou, the most preferred way of marriage, various reasons for having church weddings, perceived relationship between the two marriages, different views on the sufficiency of traditional marriages, thoughts on the expenses of church weddings, and how participants married and reasons thereof.

The findings showed that Ndaou Christians conduct church weddings for several reasons. These are because they:

- want to celebrate their marriages
- desire God’s blessings when they convert to Christianity. It is regarded as God’s biblical requirement
- understand it as a church requirement/rule
- get church teaching that encourage church weddings
- need recognition and acceptance in the church as well as general social recognition
- associate Christianity with Westernisation

- regard it as a deterrent to unfaithfulness and polygyny
- regard church weddings as having wider official recognition than traditional marriages and
- want associated material advantages.

The conclusion states that there is neither a theological nor a biblical basis for requiring Ndaou Christians to have church weddings. Using a postcolonial hybrid approach, the thesis suggests a merging of the two marriages into one ceremony. More recommendations were given and the church was challenged to be more responsive to its people's struggles.

**Key words:** Chimanimani, Christian marriage, Church weddings, Ndaou Marriage, Ndaou people, Ndaou religion/Shona religion, *Roora* or bridewealth, South Africa General Mission, Traditional marriages, United Baptist Church, Zimbabwe marriage laws.



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## **Glossary list**

*aMatsono* – people who were found already living in the lands the Ndaue people now occupy

*anaChirandu* – people of the Chirandu totem

*anhu ekwaGaza* – people of Gazaland

*babamukuru* – uncle – father's brother

*bandauko* – a part of a slaughtered animal

*bere* – hyena

*bhaisikopu* – film projected onto a wall or a cloth for public viewing

*bonde* – African mat

*chereni* – one shilling, a coin that was used back then

*chidzviti* – Nguni/Ndebele language or culture

*chigaratsvo* – part of a slaughtered animal associated with the kidney

*chigondiso* – something that symbolises the love that they each have for the other, a sign of commitment

*chimutsamapfiwa* – a girl that would be given to an old son-in-law whose wife has also become old and can no longer be sexually active 'to rekindle the fire'

*chinebvudzi* – (literally something with hair) referring to a daughter

*chiNguni* – Nguni language

*chipeneti* – a pin

*chipfuba* – part of a slaughtered animal

*chitsaramvi* – a girl that would be given in marriage to a man in his old age to 'select white hair'

*chitundu* – African round basket



*chizva* – part of a slaughtered animal (precisely ‘the thigh’)

*chuma* – a part of the *roora* payment

*danga* – (literally meaning kraal) - refers to the cattle used to pay *roora*

*dhiri* – feast

*doro* – beer (African beer brewed in homesteads)

*dorwa* – eloping

*dzviti* – Ndebele people who used to plunder and loot Shona territories

*gadzirisa* – do or make corrections

*gomba harina mwana* – an adulterer who sleeps with another man’s wife does not own the child that may result from his act

*gota* – the man’s sleeping room

*Havana kumira zvakanaka* – they are not in good standing

*Hloko* – a part of a slaughtered animal (the head to be precise)

*hloko yamadoda* – Nguni words meaning ‘the head (of a slaughtered animal) for men’

*huku* – chicken

*imbi/impi* – a chief’s soldiers

*kauswa* – a piece of grass

*koobuda* – visiting a partner’s parents or relatives during courting

*koobvunzira/kubvunzira* – the act of going to pay/of paying *roora*

*kubatanidzwa* – to be joined together

*kubika mapoto* – (literally ‘cooking pots’) – refers to cohabiting

*kubikiswa* – a Ndaou ritual act where the bride is allowed to cook in her own kitchen for the first time

*kufohla* – eloping

*kuganha* – a girl who loves a boy who has not proposed love to her goes to his home for marriage

*kugara mapfiwa* – a woman is given to a widower to replace his deceased wife

*kugara nhaka* – inheriting a wife or possessions from a deceased relative

*kugarwa nhaka* – refers to the actual act of the deceased's wife being inherited

*kukopa* – the groom's aunts go to ask for a wife from the girl's parents, this is after *roora* has already been paid

*kukumbira ndiro yemuromo* – asking for a wooden plate that would be used in the *roora* payment process

*kunxoma/kuxoma* – refers to the *roora* payment process

*kunze kwemusha* – outside the yard

*kuperekedza/kuperekedzwa* – (literally meaning accompanying) - the actual act of accompanying the bride to her husband's home.

*kupupira* – bubbling

*kupupira kupupira mumwoyo mwangu* – bubbling bubbling in my heart

*kuputsa/kuputswa* – to give or be given in marriage to a man in exchange for food or for money that needed to be used for a special purpose

*kuriga mutanda* – (literally meaning dropping a log) – a Ndau claim symbol where a log would be used as a down-payment for a newly born girl

*kuripa* – refers to paying for an offence that has been committed

*kuroora* – marrying

*kuroorana vematongo* – people from the same area marrying each other

*kutema ugariri* – working for a wife just as Jacob in the Bible did to Laban

*kuteya* – another word referring to the payment of money to the girl's parents

*kutiza-tiza* – being elusive

*kutizira* – eloping

*kutizisa mukumbo/kutizisa/kutiza mukumbo/kutizira* - eloping

*kutizisana* – a girl and boy mutually agree that she should elope with him. He may actually help with the eloping itself.

*kutsvinya* – mocking

*kuvenyika* – with reference to people outside the church

*kuwa* – literally meaning ‘falling’ - a term used to refer to those who become sexually involved before they have a church wedding

*kuzadzikisa* – literally meaning ‘to fulfil’ or ‘to fill up’

*kuzadzisa* – literally meaning ‘to fulfil’ or ‘to fill up’ – refers to being joined in holy matrimony even after staying together for long (after the customary marriage)

*kuzvarira/kuzvarirwa* – giving a daughter to an old man while she is still young

*kwamudzviti* – the District Commissioner’s office

*lobola* – money paid to the girl or woman’s parents

*mabiko* – feast

*madhora* – dollars

*madzviti* – plural of *Dzviti*, a term used to refer to the Ndebele people who would plunder and loot Shona territories

*mafuta* – oil

*mahewu/maheu* – a non-intoxicating African brew

*mahindekinde* – a celebration in Bocha to accept a girl when she elopes

*makosozana* – derived from *Nkosazana* (Zulu for girl), a term used to refer to white missionaries’ wives

*mapadza* – hoes that were used for *roora* payment

*mapondo* – pounds

*mapoto* – (literally meaning pots) – refers to cohabiting

*matekenyandebvu* – (literally tickling the beard) – a small amount of money that is paid to the girl's father apparently because the girl used to tickle her father's beard when she was young

*mbudzi* – goat

*michato* – weddings

*mitimba* – plural of *mutimba*

*mombe* – cow

*mombe dzehumai* – (literally mother's cows) – cattle given to the girl's mother to thank her for bearing the girl. Normally it is just one beast (*mombe yeumai*)

*mombe yeumai* – a cow given to the girl's mother to thank her for bearing the girl

*muchato* – church wedding

*muchato wechingezi* – white wedding

*muchato wepenisera* – (literally pencil marriage), a wedding without a feast. A wedding where the two partners simply sign the marriage register together with their witnesses

*mugariri* – normally used when a man wanted to marry a chief's daughter. The man would stay with the chief until he and the chief's daughter had borne children. One or some of the children would be given to the chief and the rest would be the couple's

*mukadzi wengozi* – a woman that has been used to avenge the spirit of a dead person. She is said to be married spiritually to that spirit.

*mukwasha/mukwambo* – son-in-law

*mumba mamai vemurume* – in the husband's mother's house

*mumbuti* – tree

*munhu wenyu* – your person

*muntu* – a person

*munyai* – a go-between

*musengabere* – (literally ‘carrying a hyena’) - a Ndau way of marrying where a man would just grab and carry the girl that he loved to his home.

*mutengatore* – exchanging one thing for another with another person. It could also refer to an act where two fathers exchange each other’s daughters in marriage

*mutenganiso* – exchanging; also a Ndau way of marriage where fathers would exchange their daughters with each other in marriage

*muti* – a stick

*mutimba* – Ndau traditional wedding. A Ndau custom in which the bride would be taken to her husband’s home accompanied by relatives and friends. This is said to have been associated with the most preferred Ndau way of marrying where money was paid to the parents of the girl first.

*mutsipi* – neck

*mutumbi* – corpse

*mutumbu* – a girl who would be used by her father to appease the ancestors or avenging spirits

*mwauya* – Ndau greeting

*ndatotizira* – I have eloped

*ndauwe* – Ndau way of responding to a greeting or a call

*nehasha* – in a violent way

*ngakubatwe penisera* – (literally ‘people should hold the pencil’) – meaning people should be allowed to just sign the marriage register without having to organise a feast. So, people can wed each other at the marriage officer’s house or in church without

having to feed the people and spend unnecessarily on other wedding expenses (see *muchato wepenisera* above)

*ngozi* – avenging spirit

*pachiwanze* – outside the huts

*pfuma* – what would be used to pay the girl's parents sometimes including cattle and/or money

*pondo* – pound (British currency), gold money that was used back then among the Ndaou people

*ranga rachona risina nemukadzi* – he had taken too long without a wife

*roora* – money paid to the girl or woman's parents

*rombe* – vagabond

*Ruiyano* – women's fellowship group in United Baptist Church

*sadza* – thick porridge

*sahwira* – a close friend

*salibonani* – Nguni greeting

*tinotsvakawo pokubikirwa* – (literally meaning 'we are looking for somewhere where food may be cooked for us') – meaning 'we are looking for a wife'

*tiri vepano* – we belong here

*touyeyo* – means we are coming there

*tsengeramutombo* – a man's child that he would give to the father-in-law as a way of thanking the latter for giving him his daughter

*tsvakiraikuno/tsvakiraiuno* – literally means 'search here'. It refers to a small amount of money that is paid to a girl's parents as a way of informing them that their daughter is living with the man who has sent the money

*ufu* – maize-meal

ugariri – a man who did not have money to pay *roora* would go work for the in-laws for some time

*VaHode* – Hode people

*Vakweyi* – men's fellowship group in United Baptist Church

*vanasekuru* – uncles

*vanhu* – people

*vantu* – people

*vanyai* – *go-between*s

*vasharuka* – elderly people

*vashe* – the kings or chiefs

*vavakidzani* – neighbours

*vhuka mukando* – a shout preceding the throwing of coins

*yawe* – the man's sleeping room

*yaya woye taakuenda* – our sister we are leaving

*yaya woye tovhaisa* – Our sister we are bidding farewell

*yebo* – Nguni greeting

*yedanga* – (literally meaning 'for the kraal') - part of the money that would be paid to the girl's parents

*yekubvunzira/yekoobvunzira* – the way of paying *roora* first

*zuka/zukwa* – meaning six pence, a coin that was used back then

*zveumai* – what is given to the girl's mother when her partner comes to pay *roora*

*zvikaba* – gifts given during the African traditional wedding

*zvira*hwe – idioms

*zvirango* – Ndaou traditional rituals

*zviyo* – grain



## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION AND GENERAL ORIENTATION TO THE STUDY

#### 1.1 GENERAL INTRODUCTION

The Ndau live in the Eastern parts of Zimbabwe, specifically in the Chimanimani and Chipinge Districts, and in Mozambique. The Ndau who live on either side of the border are separated in principle by the colonial border but in everyday living the border is crossed from either side as if it was non-existent. The focus of this thesis is on the Ndau in the Chimanimani District. The Chimanimani District was evangelised by the missionaries from the South Africa General Mission (SAGM) in the 1890s. The first contact with the SAGM missionaries was in 1897 when they established a mission station at Rusitu in Chimanimani. Later, in the 1900s, there was to be a mission school, mission hospital and a Bible College (1953) at Rusitu mission centre. Biriiri mission school was opened in 1956 in a separate place in the same district of Chimanimani. Both Rusitu mission and Biriiri mission became very important in the evangelisation of the Chimanimani district and, consequently, for the changes in cultural practices including those of marriage.

Although the Ndau had many different forms of getting married, contact with the Westerners brought some significant changes in the former's marriage practices. Details about the different forms of Ndau traditional marriage practices will be given in Chapter 3. The SAGM missionaries did not accept the marriage practices of the Ndau because they considered them to be pagan and unchristian. They tried to eradicate these practices, including *roora* (commonly known in other places as *lobola*) in vain. Having failed to completely eradicate them, the SAGM missionaries went on to teach that after being married in the traditional way the Ndau people were required to conduct church (white) marriages for their marriages to be recognised by the church (Hatch, 1907: 99; Ngundu, 2010: 6, 94, 95; Daneel, 1971: 249). This will further be explored in Chapter 4. This has remained the trend even after the political independence that was attained in 1980. The Church has not rethought its position on the necessity of having what appears to be a duplication of marriages.

It is within this background that this thesis is situated. It seeks to investigate or establish the connection between the Ndaou cultural practices and the Western cultural practices in parts of the Chimanimani district especially as far as marriages are concerned.

The current chapter will provide the research assumptions, area of investigation, research problem and research question, justification, the aim of the study, objectives, research methodology, and data collection (methods). It will also treat sampling, data analysis, data verification and ethical considerations together with key terms and/or concepts, and an outline of thesis chapters.

Just as Shoko (2007: 3) mentions that he was studying his own people (the Karanga of Mberengwa, Zimbabwe) and that he was giving an 'insider-view', I do the same here. I was born and bred in Chimanimani District, specifically in Dzingire village, where the SAGM missionaries made the first contact with the Ndaou people of Chimanimani, Zimbabwe. I am a Ndaou man and a pastor in the United Baptist Church (UBC), a church that was born out of the exploits of the SAGM missionaries in Chimanimani District. More about the 'insider perspective' will be discussed under the disadvantages of phenomenology later on in this chapter.

## **1.2 AREA OF INVESTIGATION**

The current research is a trans-disciplinary project. Some scholars maintain that the religion of an African is an integral element of all other aspects of the African's life. Thorpe (1991:52), for example, indicates that, "the boundaries between religion and culture are not always discernible in African traditional societies." In line with the above, Mugambi (1989:141) asserts that, "in traditional African life there is no compartmentalisation of the various aspects of life ... an African's cultural identity includes his religious background which is an integral part of his culture. An African cannot denounce his traditional culture without denouncing the total heritage of his people". The foregoing discussion concurs with Mbiti (1989:1-3) who asserts that, "Africans are notoriously religious ... because traditional religions permeate all departments of life, there is no formal distinction between the sacred and the secular, between the religious and the non-religious, between the spiritual and the material

areas of life.” In other words, the whole of an African’s existence is a religious phenomenon (Mbiti, 1969: 442). Cox (2000: 231) consequently argues that “African indigenous religions are co-extensive with their societies” and that “it is difficult for outsiders to recognize religious as opposed to public ceremonies” (Cox, 2000: 231).

It ought to be mentioned, however, that other scholars, among them Shorter (1997b), find the above problematic. While the argument above gives the impression that Africans are unique as far as religiosity is concerned, on the contrary these scholars maintain that Africans share this trait with several other people of the world.

The aforementioned serves to bring to the fore the point that if religion is this inextricably intertwined with an African’s life, then different disciplines that study various aspects of a human being are useful in this study: amongst them, Religious Studies, Anthropology, and Sociology.

The area of investigation therefore falls under Christianity in Africa and how Christianity relates to Ndaou cultural practices in the Chimanimani District. The ways in which Christianity and Ndaou cultural practices relate to each other affect the social lives of the Ndaou people.

### **1.3 RESEARCH PROBLEM AND RESEARCH QUESTION**

Corbin and Strauss (2008: 19) define the research problem as “the general issue or focus of the research” and the research question as “the specific query to be addressed by this research.” They add that the question(s) sets the perimeters of the project and suggests the methods to be used for data gathering and analysis.

As already established, the Ndaou Christians of Chimanimani, Zimbabwe, marry traditionally but are also required to marry in church (have church weddings). The Church, as mentioned above, has not rethought its position on the necessity of what appears to be a duplication of marriages. The specific query that this thesis seeks to address revolves around the connection between and the necessity for both the traditional and the Christian marriages among Ndaou Christians in Chimanimani.

## **1.4 JUSTIFICATION**

The Ndaou people of Chimanimani have been for a long time on the leeward side of research. Although a lot of research has been done among the Shona, many of these studies focus on the Shona in general and not on the Ndaou. The few that are on the Ndaou are not specifically on those in Chimanimani and do not address the problem of the connection between traditional marriages and church marriages. In fact, there is very little information concerning the Ndaou of Chimanimani District. Not much is known about how the SAGM missionaries entered and evangelised the Chimanimani District, including how their teachings affected and influenced the social lives of the Ndaou. This thesis seeks to fill the gap that exists in knowledge about the Ndaou people of this region and their marriage practices, past and present.

## **1.5 AIM OF THE STUDY**

The aim of this thesis is to develop an in-depth understanding of the Ndaou people's perceptions and experiences on the connection between and the necessity for both the traditional and the Christian marriages in Chimanimani, Zimbabwe, as well as to give recommendations for practice changes to the United Baptist Church of Zimbabwe and for legislation changes to legislators in Zimbabwe. Postcolonialism was employed to meet this aim.

## **1.6 OBJECTIVES**

This thesis sought to obtain data regarding the Ndaou people's understanding of marriage practices, by conducting in-depth semi-structured interviews facilitated by open-ended questions contained in an interview guide. It obtained a sample of Ndaou people in Chimanimani, with participants meeting specific criteria. Purposive sampling was used to identify participants. The thesis gave the history of the South Africa General Mission (SAGM) from its formation to its involvement in Zimbabwe. The historical and geographical background of the Ndaou people was also explored. Ndaou views about traditional and Christian marriages were explored together with reasons for what motivates the Ndaou either to marry traditionally or through a Christian wedding or both. The participants were drawn from adults (18 years and above) who were either

married or unmarried. The data was interpreted and analysed before it was presented in thesis chapter(s). Conclusions were drawn and recommendations for the church, legislators, and for practice were also made.

## **1.7 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

Corbin and Strauss (2008: 1) define 'methodology' as "a way of thinking about and studying social phenomena."

This study is qualitative in nature. It is not focussed on the number of occurrences of phenomena but on the nature of social phenomena. According to Boeije (2010:24), "Qualitative inquiry allows one to answer questions about the nature of social phenomena under study rather than the prevalence of phenomena. This means that all aspects of a phenomenon will be dissected and described, and possibly an attempt will be made to understand how the phenomenon is built-up, what the relationships are between the different parts, and what influences the absence or presence of certain parts". In other words, while quantitative study focuses on the prevalence of phenomena the current study concerns itself with the nature of marriages among the Ndau and how traditional and Christian marriage practices relate to each other.

As a qualitative study, this thesis seeks to understand the Ndau traditional marriage practices and the Christian marriage practices as the Ndau understand them. A major strength of qualitative research is that its purpose "is to describe and understand social phenomena in terms of the meaning people bring to them...". (Boeije, 2010: 11). This "meaning" is also called "the socially constructed nature of reality" (Denzin & Ryan, 2007: 582) and the "meaning that people award to their social worlds" (Boeije, 2010: 12). Babbie (2004: 290) mentions that, "Alfred Schutz (1967, 1970) who introduced phenomenology, argued that reality was socially constructed rather than being "out there" for us to observe. People describe their world not 'as it is' but 'as they make sense of it' ...". This study proceeds from the above premise that there is no concrete reality that awaits discovery out there. What exists is the socially constructed reality that this research sought to investigate from the interviews and focus groups that were conducted among the Ndau people.

In essence, therefore, this study sought to explore the relationship between the two prevalent types of marriages (traditional and Christian) among the Ndaou people. These are both valued and followed by the Ndaou. The nature of these marriages and the type of relationship that exists between them was, therefore of uttermost importance in this study. The perspectives and understandings of the Ndaou themselves formed an invaluable resource for obtaining the answers to the questions that this study posits.

Qualitative studies, therefore, implicitly presuppose a good working relationship between the researcher and the researched. Denzin and Ryan (2007: 582) stress the importance of what they call “an intimate relationship between the researcher and what is studied”. The meaning is embedded in the social context of the Ndaou of Chimanimani. This meaning is what this thesis sets out to glean. The Ndaou people hold the keys to any endeavour to understand their social norms and thought patterns. It is in interacting with them that the researcher was able to share in their world and to understand why they understand marriage the way they do.

Closely linked to the above is the fact that qualitative inquiry is not executed while the researcher sits in a laboratory somewhere. This is a further strength of this approach. Qualitative researchers, in the words of Denzin and Ryan (2007: 580), “study things in their natural settings”. The natural setting, in this case the Ndaou people’s world, was very important in this study. Friesen (2010: 26-27) stresses that the interviewees have to be met with in settings where they feel most comfortable. I therefore endeavoured to meet the Ndaou in their communities. Interviews and focus groups were conducted within these.

This study was not be able to utilise all the tools available to qualitative research. It nonetheless used interviews to tap into the Ndaou people’s understandings and personal experiences. Focus groups were utilised as a tool additional to the individual interviews. More about interviews and focus groups will follow later in this chapter under ‘data collection’.

A further strength of qualitative studies is that “the focus is on getting richness of information and allowing subjects to speak for themselves, as opposed to the researcher following an agenda that is set before the data collection process” (Friesen 2010: 26). This is why this study used semi-structured interviews that allowed the

interviewees to provide as much information as they possibly could without having to follow a rigid questionnaire as in quantitative studies.

Qualitative inquiry has been selected for this study because the researcher believes it brings the richness of the social world of the Ndaou to the fore. Meaning was obtained from the individual accounts and the focus groups that were conducted. Friesen (2010: 27) asserts that, “qualitative studies are particularly well suited for exploring new kinds of phenomena that have not yet been studied much, for generating theories regarding these new topics, and for securing the richness or depth of information not found in other kinds of empirical studies.”

The first of the two approaches that this study utilised was the phenomenological approach. The second one was postcolonialism. The former was employed during fieldwork while the latter was utilised in analysing and presenting the research findings. Phenomenology was employed to describe the understandings of marriage, both African and Western, while postcolonialism was the paradigm from which this thesis proceeded. Postcolonialism, therefore, was used to analyse and interpret data that is obtained using the phenomenological approach. Thus, it ought to be stated that the study did not merely present descriptions of the experiences and understandings of the Ndaou marriage practices. The same descriptions and/or perceptions of marriages by the Ndaou were critically interpreted using postcolonialism. In essence, therefore, the individual and focus group interviews employed the phenomenological approach while the data that was obtained was analysed and interpreted using postcolonialism. Although some scholars maintain that it is impossible to be critical while at the same time using phenomenological methods, this thesis submits that it can be done. Chidester (1994: 227-229) acknowledges and demonstrates that a critical phenomenology of religion is possible. He (1994: 229) asserts that such “... a critical phenomenology of religion ... is not only dedicated to uncovering substantial meaning, but also to exposing the situational and contested power relations that permeate the space of the sacred.” In its analysis and interpretation of data, as well as in presenting research findings, the study endeavoured to expose the said power relations between Western marriage practices and Ndaou marriage practices. Its own approach can, therefore be justifiably classified as “critical phenomenology.”

### 1.7.1 The Phenomenological Approach

Phenomenology is one research strategy or paradigm among many that can be used in qualitative research. Other research strategies include ethnography, biography, case study and/or grounded theory (Delpont & Fouché, 2005: 266). The current study utilised phenomenology.

Phenomenology was employed to describe the understandings of marriage, both African and Western. One aspect of phenomenology is *epoche*. The Greek word means “bracketing”, as in suspending one’s presuppositions when doing research. According to Cox (1996: 26-27) “the phenomenologist wants to observe the phenomena as they appear rather than as they are understood through opinions formed prior to observations.” It ought to be mentioned, however, that phenomenology has been problematised and in using it I do not presuppose that it is perfect and without limitations.

Phenomenology concerns itself with human experience. The phenomenological approach to research focuses on pure human experiences that are basic and raw – that are yet to be analysed. It preoccupies itself with gaining a clear picture of people’s experiences (Denscombe, 2007: 77). It is therefore a very fitting approach in unearthing the world of the Ndaou which had not been researched until now.

It is important to mention that phenomenology is not a compact or homogenous approach. There are different strands to it but two major ones are normally more emphasised. The two main types are the European version and the ‘new phenomenology’ which has a North American origin. The former emphasises the universal essence of any given phenomenon while the latter is more concerned with describing the ways in which humans give meaning to their experiences. The North American version, therefore, is satisfied with describing what is being experienced rather than seeking to find the essence of human experience. The new phenomenology places some value on describing human experiences for their own sake. It is concerned with the ways people interpret social phenomena (Denscombe, 2007: 76, 83-84).



This study leans towards the latter version (the North American one). It argues that it is a significant project in its own right to acquire an understanding of the perceptions and experiences of the Ndaou concerning marriage.

In practice, the two strands mentioned above are not always easy to distinguish. There is a cross-pollination of ideas between them (Denscombe, 2007: 84). The two strands are, therefore, not completely divorced from each other. Borrowing in one way or another happens from the other strand when one is using either one of the two. This is why it should be emphasised that the two have much in common although they differ significantly as demonstrated above.

Although the approach has been problematised, it still has many merits that support its use. Some of its advantages are that it gives authentic accounts; it values human experiences; it is suitable for small-scale research; and interesting stories come out of the description of experiences (Denscombe, 2007: 85). Cox (2012: 30) argues that phenomenology still provides a cutting-edge approach to the study of religions with implications for new understandings of African religions, irrespective of mounting criticism against the method since 1980. He adds that the declaration of the death of phenomenology is premature. In acknowledging the usefulness of phenomenology, Westerlund (1993: 44) states that, "In research on African religions carried out by scholars of religion, the phenomenological or comparative perspective has been predominant."

Another great strength of phenomenology is that it allows those studied to speak for themselves. It shares this trait with postcolonialism, which seeks to afford the voiceless some space to speak. Phenomenology acknowledges the fact that the researched have a voice and do not need someone else to speak on their behalf. The approach aims to make sense of the meaning that participants give to their lived experiences. The researcher therefore needs to identify people who have experienced the phenomenon under investigation. Data are collected and analysed in order to come up with an understanding of people's experiences (Fouché, 2005: 270). In line with the above, Smith and Pangasapa (2007: 403) mention that, "... the marginalized and powerless actually do not need researchers to speak for them as such but that they just need academic investigations to start and finish with respondents in mind." In simple terms, "a phenomenological study is a study that attempts to understand

people's perceptions, perspectives and understanding of a particular situation" (Fouché, 2005: 264). According to Olupona and Sulayman (1993: 12) phenomenology lets the "religions under study speak for themselves."

The advantages of the phenomenological approach far outweigh what critics proffer as its disadvantages. It needs to be pointed out here that many of the so called disadvantages are in actual fact strengths of the approach. Critics of phenomenology list as disadvantages what the approach deliberately does not do. They judge the approach using quantitative standards that are not appropriate to phenomenology which is a qualitative approach to research. Cox (2012: 33) mentions that the fact that interpretations of religious communities employed by phenomenologists of religion differ from those within specific social scientific disciplines neither invalidates the phenomenological method nor disparages the tools used by other social sciences. This study found phenomenology to be very relevant and useful in the pursuit of the data that it sought to gather from the Ndau of Chimanimani.

One of the most cited disadvantages of phenomenology is that it proceeds from assumptions that are, somewhat, impracticable. The assumption that one can 'bracket' his or her assumptions as he or she approaches phenomena has been heavily criticised. How one can successfully do this has been critically questioned. It almost gives the impression that a researcher is a mechanical being that engages and disengages his or her mind as he or she sees fit. No one can dispute the fact that the human mind does not work in this way (Cox, 1996b: 156, 157, 158; Shoko, 2007: 3; Bourdillon, 1996: 147-151; Platvoet and Olupona, 1996: 18-19; Westerlund; 1993: 59). According to Bourdillon (1996: 148), "The phenomenologist's prescription of the exercise of *epochè* can be accepted only as an instruction to listen..." The present author exercised his 'listening' capabilities to the best of his ability.

The 'emic' (insider) and 'etic' (outsider) discussions further confound the aforementioned methodological challenge. The impracticability of a tenet such as *epochè* cannot be solved by using either. Insiders will always have presuppositions and outsiders have their own presuppositions as well (Bourdillon, 1996: 140, 141). As an insider, the present author tried as much as was possible not to 'speak on behalf of the participants' but rather to let them speak while he listened and probed when he felt it appropriate to do so. This can be argued to be some form of 'bracketing' but it

does not mean that the researcher was completely blank. I concur with Bourdillon's argument that, "We need to distinguish between an open mind and an empty mind. The only way to be totally without prejudice is to be, like an infant, totally without knowledge" (Bourdillon, 1996: 148).

In line with the above, Platvoet and Olupona (1996: 16) state that, "Methodological independence, however, does not forbid that a scholar is a believer of a particular religion, or that the study of religions is pursued in an institutional context which is wedded intimately to a particular religion." They acknowledge the contribution that insiders can bring to a study in stating that "... 'insider' specialists will develop in-depth analyses which will challenge and remove the facile generalisations which are now often made about religions in our profession." (Platvoet and Olupona, 1996: 16). Isichei (2004: 10), however, cautions that, "... clearly, one does not have to be a member of a religious group in order to study it..."

A common perception about phenomenology is that it is just about pure descriptions of phenomena. This study, as mentioned earlier, employed 'critical phenomenology'. It, therefore, described phenomena but went on to analyse and 'critique' the findings from data collected. Shoko (2007: 3-4) asserts that, "... the phenomenological method allows for hermeneutics, the art of interpretation... Since an interpretation is involved, however, the conclusion presented will not necessarily be identical with what a believer would consciously state."

We cannot avoid passing judgments or commenting critically in the process of studying phenomena. This, in essence, is what the academic enterprise is all about (Platvoet and Olupona, 1996: 18; Bourdillon, 1996: 139, 140, 142, 147, 148, 150). In line with the aforementioned, Bourdillon (1996: 149) notes that, "In some cases, a belief held by the people we study is clearly wrong... There are extreme cases in which judgement is obviously justifiable. Generally, people do and must make judgements about culture and about religion in particular." This study went by this premise – judgement and/or 'critique' was given as and when it was deemed necessary to proffer it. This concurs with Bourdillon's (1996: 150) assertion that, "We should not be judgemental in every academic statement we make. But it is healthy to be aware that our academic work is often based on judgements of value, and we should not be afraid to make these explicit when it is appropriate to do so."

### **1.7.2 Postcolonialism as the research paradigm for the study**

Postcolonialism is the philosophical orientation that undergirds this research. Corbin and Strauss (2008: 1) define a 'philosophical orientation' as "a worldview that underlies and informs methodology and methods." According to Delport and Fouché (2005: 261), "the first thing a researcher must outline is the paradigm that underpins the study – the researcher's point of view, or frame of reference for looking at life or understanding reality." As already stated earlier, apart from phenomenology, postcolonialism was utilised as a point of departure for this study.

The term 'postcolonial' is a contested term but there is also general acceptance that there is no realistic alternative (Kennedy, 2000: 112). Ashcroft and Ahluwalia (2001: 15) assert that, "the 'post' in the term refers to 'after colonialism began' rather than 'after colonialism ended', because the cultural struggles between imperial and dominated societies continue into the present". The term can evidently be easily misunderstood. Kennedy (2000: 112) argues that one reason for the dissatisfaction (with the term postcolonial) is because it suggests, wrongly, that the era of Western domination and exploitation of non-Western countries is over, whereas although colonialism may have been dismantled, the global imperialism of Western capitalism continues. A common thought that emerges here is the fact that colonialism may have ended in principle but it lives on in practice. People in once dominated communities continue to live under the spell of domination in one way or another.

Sugirtharajar (2006: 538) refers to post-colonialism as an "offshoot of postmodernism". The most notable exponents of post-colonialism have been Said, Bhabha and Spivak. In the words of Berry and Murray (2000: 6), "they have been referred to as the 'Holy Trinity' in postcolonial discourse(s)" (Kennedy, 2000: 115). Postcolonial theory developed largely as a result of Said's work, which has been continued, opened out, modified and challenged by the work of scholars, notably Homi Bhabha and Gayatri Spivak (Kennedy, 2000: 111, 115).

Postcolonial theory investigates, and develops propositions about, the cultural and political impact of European conquest upon colonised societies, and the nature of those societies' responses. It is concerned with the responses of the colonised: the struggle to control self-representation; the tussle over representations of place, history, race, ethnicity; and the struggle to present a local reality to a global audience. The role

of the post-colonial intellectual is to act as a reminder of colonialism and its continuing effects as well as to clarify and expand the space which post-colonial societies have been able to carve out for themselves (Ashcroft & Ahluwalia, 2001: 15, 40). In other words, it affords the 'colonised' a voice and space to be heard.

A great deal can be said about postcolonialism but it is also not a single or homogeneous approach. It is important to note that Edward W Said, Homi Bhabha and Gayatri Spivak (the 'Holy Trinity') contributed in different ways to postcolonialism, agreeing in some areas and differing in others.

Said is known for his postcolonial criticism and theory, including *Orientalism* (1978), one of the founding works of modern postcolonial studies (Said, 1993: 718). Underlying much of the discussion of *Orientalism* is a disquieting realisation that the relationship between cultures is both uneven and irremediably secular (Said, 1985: 39). Perhaps the most familiar of *Orientalism*'s themes is that since the Orientals cannot represent themselves, they must be represented by others who know more about Islam than Islam knows itself. The understanding here is that it is often the case that one can be known by others in different ways than he/she knows himself/herself. Said cautions, however, that the above is quite a different thing than pronouncing it as immutable law that outsiders *ipso facto* have a better sense of you as an insider than you do of yourself (Said, 1985: 37, 38). According to Ashcroft and Ahluwalia (2001: 5), "Said persistently locates himself as a person who is dislocated, 'exiled' from his homeland. But rather than invent some essential Palestinian cultural reality, he insists that all cultures are changing constantly, that culture and identity themselves are processes". The current study benefitted immensely from this understanding. It did not seek to establish the pre-colonial Ndau culture or marriage practices but to understand them as they are experienced in a hybrid context.

Bhabha is well known for his discussions on hybridity, among others. He contends that recovering the pre-colonial times is not achievable. Instead he proposes what he calls a 'third space'. He argues that "... we should remember that it is the 'inter' – the cutting edge of translation and negotiation, the in between, the space of the *entre* ... that carries the burden of the meaning of culture... It is in this space that we will find those words with which we can speak of Ourselves and Others. And by exploring this 'Third

Space', we may elude the politics of polarity and emerge as the others of our selves" (Bhabha, 1988: 67).

Bhabha describes cultural ambivalence as dramatised in what he calls mimicry. Inevitably, in a world of cultural mixing and differences of power, colonised people often end up mimicking their colonisers, adopting the colonisers' language, educational systems, governmental systems, clothing, music, and so on (Bhabha, 1983; 1994: 668).

According to Kennedy (2000: 118), "Bhabha's importance in the field of postcolonial studies may be attributed to three factors: his insistence on the heterogeneity of colonial and postcolonial experience, his concept of hybridity in colonial and postcolonial societies, and his concept of mimicry. All three – heterogeneity, hybridity and mimicry – can be seen as continuing the work Said began in *Orientalism*, but they do so in unexpected ways".

Gayatri Spivak is well known for her discussion of what she calls the 'subaltern'. A subaltern is someone with less power. She extensively treats the issue of the Hindu widows who had to sacrifice themselves on the pyre of their dead husbands. Although the rite was abolished in 1829, Spivak mentions and argues against the Indian nativist argument, a parody of the nostalgia for lost origins which says, "The women actually wanted to die." For her all such clear-cut nostalgia for lost origins is suspect (Spivak, 1995: 675, 677).

According to Spivak (1988 ; 1995), "... the problem of the muted subject of the subaltern woman, though not solved by an 'essentialist' search for lost origins, cannot be served by the call for more theory in Anglo-America either." It is not a "parody of the nostalgia for lost origins." Just as Spivak (1988) notes that the problem of the muted subject of the subaltern woman could not be solved by an "essentialist" search for lost origins, this thesis also proceeds from an understanding that the issue in question does not lie in the search for lost origins. The study is also not a "parody of the nostalgia for lost origins" (Spivak 1988; 1995). It inclined more towards hybridity with an understanding that, in a global world, the purely indigenous form may not be easily attainable, and perhaps, may not be necessary.

In line with the above, Idowu (1973b: 106) submits that, “In the study of African traditional religion, we do not set out to glorify the dead past of Africa... If there are any values by which the forbears lived and by which the present generations are living, if there is any heritage from the past which is spiritually and morally potent for today, these are the things to be researched..., refined if need be, and preserved for posterity.” A ‘parody of the nostalgia for lost origins’ was out of the question for this study. I concur with Idowu’s statement that, “It is both spiritually and morally wrong to approach our study with the mind that for Africans, whatever had or has been African, practised traditionally by Africans centuries ago, recently or currently, must be good enough. This is to study with prejudice. African scholars need to beware of being so emotionally involved as to lose their scholarly perspective” (Idowu, 1973b: 106).

Chidester (2000: 433) identifies two extreme positions in postcolonial studies: indigeneity and hybridity. Indigeneity seeks to go back to the indigenous pure form whereas hybridity neither focuses on the colonised nor the colonisers but takes historical change seriously and focuses on the diversity and mixture of religious traditions as well as on diasporic communities which emerged as a result of the cultural encounters. Ranger (1996: 271) mentions that ‘postcoloniality’ has meant three things: the coming of Third World identities and spokesmen into the First World; hybridity; and privileging particular methods and problematics so as to subvert the self-confident rationality of imperial science. This thesis concerns itself more fully with hybridity.

In other words, this study acknowledges the historical fact of the meeting of the cultures (the Ndaou culture and the Western culture) and while it does not seek to rewind to the pure form (before the encounter) it seeks to explore how the Ndaou make sense of the two marriage systems.

It is important to note, as Young (2003: 4) puts it, that “postcolonialism involves first the argument that the nations of the three non-Western continents (Africa, Asia, Latin America) are largely in a situation of subordination to Europe, North America and in a position of economic inequality.” This subordination can be demonstrated in the fact that some of the Ndaou, for example, practise Western marriage practices without even giving much thought to why they do so. It seems that the missionary-imposed way of conducting marriages subordinates some of these Ndaou people to Europe or to European marriage practices. One can say that postcolonialism attempts to assist

those who suffered under colonialism to find themselves. It helps give voice to those who, in the past, were not allowed to speak. It revitalises the once trashed cultures of African, Asian and Latin American peoples.

Postcolonialism is not a term favoured by everyone. Young (2003: 7) notes that, “a lot of people do not like the term ‘postcolonial’ because it disturbs the order of the world, it threatens privilege and power, and it refuses to acknowledge the superiority of the Western cultures. Its radical agenda is to demand equality and well-being for all human beings on this earth.” Postcolonialism was nonetheless important in this study in asserting the identity of the Ndaou and the relevance of their marriage practices in a hybrid world.

To a very great extent, postcolonialism has much to do with people taking back power and control for themselves. According to Young (2001: 4), “if colonial history, particularly in the nineteenth century, was the history of the imperial appropriation of the world, the history of the twentieth century has witnessed the peoples of the world taking power and control back for themselves ... postcolonial theory is itself a product of this dialectical process.” One can extend this to the history of the twenty-first century, which has also continued to witness peoples of the once colonised territories reasserting themselves and their cultural practices.

With colonialism, the foreign culture became the dominant culture in colonial encounters. Biko (1984: 30) (*Readings: Some African Cultural Concepts*) mentions that, “The advent of Western culture changed our outlook drastically. No more could we run our own affairs. We were required to fit in as people tolerated with great restraint in a Western type society ... we are judged in terms of standards we are not responsible for. Whenever colonisation sets in with its dominant culture it devours the native culture and leaves behind a bastardised culture that can only thrive at the rate and pace allowed it by the dominant culture. This is what has happened to African culture ... African people ... are mimicking the white man [sic] rather unashamedly.” This mimicking the white person is a reality in many African communities. This is not the problem. The problem lies in continuing to mimic without asking why one is doing what he or she is doing. The Ndaou Christians need to ask themselves this pertinent question.



The destructive nature of colonialism cannot be underestimated. Mugambi (2003: 37) notes that “the colonial experience was destructive of African social and physical infrastructures ...” Ndaou marriage practices are some of the African social infrastructures that were shattered.

Colonialism was determined to wipe out every aspect of indigenous culture. Fanon (1963) rightly mentions how the colonisers actually wanted to destroy the past of those that they colonised, which is why it is important that the colonised reflect on their identities in light of this historical fact. Fanon (1963: 629-630) mentions that, “colonialism is not simply content to impose its rule upon the present and the future of a dominated country, is not satisfied merely with holding a people in its grip and emptying the native’s brain of all form and content ... by a kind of perverted logic, it turns to the past of the oppressed people, and distorts, disfigures, and destroys it.” According to Rayner (1962: 11), “The pioneers did not merely take over a tract of land in Central Africa; they imposed their way of life on an existing society which, because of its material poverty, they dismissed as worthless and savage.” In line with this, Thomas (2005: 180) argues that, “To dismantle another people’s cultural story and heritage is an act of barbarism.” A great deal, therefore, has to be done to make the African, and specifically the Ndaou, understand that his or her own marriage practices are not in any way inferior to those of the Westerners.

The effects of colonialism were far-reaching. Pollock (2002:2) argues that, “for many, colonialism was an acute experience of displacement”. Ngugi wa Thiong’o (2006: 390) notes that, “if you control the mind of the people, you do not need the police to control them at any other level ... you can also see how that control can change not only how people look at one another but how they look at their relationship to those controlling them ... the colonised develop attitudes of distancing themselves from their own languages and their own cultures.” Ngugi wa Thiong’o (1986: 654) argues, in a separate work, that “... it’s [colonialism’s] most important area of domination was the mental universe of the colonized, the control through culture, of how people perceived themselves and their relationship to the world ... To control a people’s culture is to control their tools of self-definition in relationship to others”. The Ndaou could have been affected by colonialism to such an extent as well. This study sought to discover how the Ndaou have made sense of their realities from pre-colonial times throughout the colonial times to the present.

Postcolonialism is very much in line with Africanisation and decolonization. Chitando, Adogame and Bateye (2012: 2) assert that, “The process of ‘intellectual decolonization’ is necessarily a difficult one since one of the effects of colonization is to enduce self-doubt on the part of the colonial subject... An inferiority complex develops in the colonial subject, leading to the desire to mimic the colonial master...”. They add that, “... many Africans struggle to uphold their African identities” and that, “Addressing issues that concern Africans is thus an integral part of the Africanization process” (Chitando, Adogame, and Bateye, 2012: 2, 6).

## 1.8 DATA COLLECTION METHODS

Tesch (1990: 7273), as cited in Eriksson and Kovalainen (2008: 4), “introduces four categories of qualitative research by their interests in characteristics of **language** (e.g. **discourse analysis**, symbolic interactionism), in discovery of regularities (e.g. grounded theory, **critical research**, **ethnography**), in discerning meaning (**phenomenology**, case study research, **hermeneutics**) and in reflection (reflective phenomenology, heuristic research).” The data collection methods that this section discusses are intrinsically interconnected with phenomenology. The research therefore inclines itself towards discerning meaning.

There is a close connection between ‘methodology’ and ‘methods’. ‘Methodology’ preoccupies itself with the ‘how’ part of producing knowledge about a given problem while ‘methods’ are the actual ways of collecting data and analysing it. In other words, the former focuses on methods (or ways) that can be used in an endeavour to try and understand the world better. The latter can be understood in two ways: methods of data collection (e.g. interviews, observation) and methods of data analysis (e.g. thematic analysis, narrative analysis). In simple terms, methods are techniques and procedures for the actual data gathering and for data analysis. The two are, therefore, closely knit together (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008: 13, 16; Corbin & Strauss, 2008: 1).

This study made use of both individual interviews and focus groups. The former were meant to bring the perspectives of individuals to the fore regarding the issue(s) in question. The latter were intended to bring the communality of knowledge to the fore.

Friesen (2010: 80) asserts that “there are many data collection options available to researchers ... Each method has its own strengths and weaknesses, and better research designs incorporate more than just one method into the overall design.”

As has already been mentioned earlier, both focus groups and individual interviews are closely compatible with qualitative research. In other words, both methods fit the current research design. Using more than just one method is meant to allow the two to complement each other. Focus groups and individual interviews were used in this research to see whether the responses received from one method are similar to those derived from another one. The two were used to gather different kinds of information (Friesen, 2010: 81; Friesen, 2004: 267).

The interviews (both individual and focus groups) were recorded using a voice recorder. Each one of them were transcribed and analysed. According to Denscombe (2007: 82), “data collection by phenomenology tends to rely on tape-recorded interviews.” The interviews were conducted among the Ndaou people. Focus groups among them served as a window through which the thinking of the group could be established. The descriptions and explanations that the Ndaou made or gave allowed me to see matters from the Ndaou people’s perspective.

### **1.8.1 Interviews**

Interviews are a very important tool in data collection. Quantitative methods may fail, or may find it hard, to capture people’s beliefs that are diverse and multifaceted. In the light of this, interviews can be understood as a very useful method in religious studies and in the study of people’s perceptions on any given phenomena. Most data collection in qualitative research uses interviews (Bremborg, 2011: 310; Greeff, 2005: 287). There are different ways of interviewing; this study followed a semi-structured model.

Interviews are said to be one of the most common and most powerful ways researchers use in a bid to try and understand other people. People’s thoughts, feelings, emotions and experiences, can best be understood when interviews are used (Fontana & Frey, 1994: 361; Denscombe, 2007: 174). Interviews seemed therefore to suit the purpose and nature of this study very well. They are pertinent because this

research sought to gain insights into the Ndau's opinions and experiences of marriages.

Interviews differ from quantitative surveys. Unlike surveys, qualitative interviews are interactions between an interviewer and a respondent in which the interviewer has a general plan of inquiry but not a specific set of questions that must be asked with particular words and in a particular order (Babbie 2004: 300). Qualitative interviews, in this sense, are not rigid data collection tools. They allow for prompts and even for the omission of other listed questions if the researcher sees that the answers have already been given when the interviewee was responding to earlier questions. They are, therefore, "essentially a conversation in which the interviewer establishes a general direction for the conversation and pursues specific topics raised by the respondent" (Babbie, 2004: 300). They are in essence therefore "conversations with a purpose" (Greef, 2005: 292-293). The fact that the interviewees are given the space to speak about themselves and their understandings of their situations is a great strength of this method. According to Miller and Crabtree (2004: 185), "the interview is a research-gathering approach that seeks to create a listening space where meaning is constructed through an interexchange/cocreation of verbal viewpoints in the interest of scientific knowing." The researcher is, therefore, not an authority in this context. He or she needs to acknowledge that the interviewee is very critical to the research and needs to be listened to, so that data can be generated from the process.

At the root of unstructured and/or semi-structured interviewing is an interest in understanding the experience of other people and the meaning they make of that experience (Greef, 2005: 292-295). As Boeije (2010: 62) puts it, "interviews provide an opportunity for researchers to learn about social life through the perspective, experience and language of those living it". This fits very well with the current research design since it is obviously important to explore the experiences of the Ndau and their understandings of their marriage practices.

### **Advantages and disadvantages of interviews**

Interviews have their own strengths and weaknesses. Some of the former are that they are a useful way of gathering large amounts of data quickly, and they are excellent for increasing the response rate rather than a paper survey that can easily be thrown away. Interviewers can also clarify queries for those who do not appear to understand

various questions, non-verbal communication of interviewees can also be invaluable, and interviews are an effective way of obtaining depth in data (Greef, 2005: 299; Friesen, 2010: 82).

Some of the limitations of interviews are that they depend on the cooperation of the people involved (the data collection process is potentially influenced by subjective interpersonal factors), participants may be unwilling to share, the researcher may ask questions that do not evoke the desired responses from interviewees, the responses could be misconstrued (or, at times, untruthful), because interviews are administered orally they take a great deal of time to complete compared to a survey and they are more expensive compared to surveys (Greef, 2005: 299; Friesen, 2010: 82).

I attempted to mitigate the above by using the skills I obtained from Unisa interviewer training workshops. Friesen (2010: 82) notes that interviewer training helps to minimise challenges such as those mentioned above although the challenges cannot be completely eliminated. Seasoned interviewers were contacted for advice on how to mitigate the above-mentioned ones but, above all, I committed to be as good a listener as is possible so as to allow the interviewees to express themselves freely without many unnecessary interruptions.

Miller and Crabtree (2004: 186) used in depth interviews to hear six family physicians and six paired patients from a small suburban community in north-central Connecticut, with the goal of identifying and comparing their understandings and experiences of pain. This study sought to pursue a similar goal: one of identifying and comparing the Ndaou people's understandings of marriages.

This research endeavoured to tap into as much of the Ndaou lived experience as is possible. According to Miller and Crabtree (2004: 201), "Qualitative 'truth' gives voice to the hidden, to the silent, to the noisy, to the unspoken obvious, to the hurt, to the joy. Good depth interview research preserves the multivocality and complexity of lived experience".

### **1.8.2 Focus Groups**

This study chose focus groups because they are a very appropriate tool for a qualitative study such as this one. Morgan (2004: 263) defines focus groups as “a research technique that collects data through group interaction on a topic determined by the researcher”.

Focus groups are a new and important complement to individual interviews. They are a fairly new method when compared to individual interviews and participant observation, for example. Focus groups are a specific kind of group interview. Some scholars treat most forms of group interviews as different forms of focus groups. On the opposite end, other scholars treat focus groups as a narrower method that should not be confused with different types of group interviews. In other words, a group interview may refer to any qualitative interview with more than one participant at a time. Focus groups, however, may be understood as a sub-group of group interviews that stress the need for interactive conduct between members of the same group as they collectively come up with mutual understandings of phenomena (Boeije, 2010: 63-64; Denzin & Ryan, 2007: 584; Morgan, 2004: 264).

The above indicates that scholars understand focus groups differently. Some view forms of group interviews as different types of focus groups while others understand focus groups as a smaller component of group interviews. This study, however, used the two terms interchangeably. It used either focus groups or group interviews to mean one and the same thing.

It is important to note that focus groups were not used as substitutes for individual interviews or as a better method compared to individual interviews. They were, rather, used as indicated earlier on, as complementary to individual interviews. Fontana and Frey (1994: 364) mention that, “the use of the group interview is not meant to replace individual interviewing, but it is an option that deserves consideration because it can provide another level of data gathering or a perspective on the research problem not available through individual interviews.” This level of data that cannot be obtained from individual interviews is one of the major reasons why this method has been considered for this study.

As mentioned earlier on, a communality of knowledge was established, something which would have been unattainable if this research had only focussed on individual interviews. Babbie (2004: 303) and Greef (2005: 286) both note that focus groups bring out aspects of the issue under investigation which interviews with individuals would not have been able to unravel. They both argue that group dynamics act as a catalytic factor bringing information to the fore that would not have surfaced in individual interviews.

Group interviews and the phenomenological approach fit together very well. As indicated earlier on, group interviews can be used together with other methods. They complement each other most effectively. Fontana and Frey (1994: 365) note that “group interviews can also be used for triangulation purposes or employed in conjunction with other data gathering techniques ... phenomenological purposes are served where group interviews are conducted in an unstructured (or semi-structured) way in the field.”

The number of people involved in a focus group is a subject of debate. Researchers vary regarding the number of people that should be included in one. A point of convergence, however, is that the people to be involved should neither be too many nor too few. The numbers range from four (4) to twelve (12). Some participants remain very silent or speak very little in large groups. Smaller groups (say 4-8 participants) are more accommodating. They allow all participants an opportunity to participate. Since all participants are usually active in smaller groups, interesting and relevant data are collected. There is a sense in which groups that are smaller than four may lose qualities or aspects of being a group. Group size should be tailored in a way that lively discussions are triggered. The number of participants, however, depends on the participants and the subject under investigation (Smithson, 2008: 359; Greef, 2005: 305; Boeijs, 2010: 64). I made a conscious attempt to avoid both extremes. I aimed to have at least four people in a group but the groups were limited to a maximum of ten people.

The participants were selected with a consideration of the fact that they are qualified to speak on the issues in question. People who are believed to be well informed in matters concerning the Ndaou marriage practices were asked to participate in the focus groups. Babbie (2004: 303) notes that, “the subjects are selected on the basis of

relevance to the topic under study... Participants in focus groups are not likely to be chosen through rigorous, probability sampling methods. This means that the participants do not statistically represent any meaningful population. However, the purpose of the study is to explore rather than to describe or explain in any definitive sense. Nevertheless, typically more than one focus group is convened in a given study because of the serious danger that a single group ... will be too atypical to offer any generalizable insights.” The issue of the number of focus groups will be addressed below.

Purposive sampling is critical to focus groups. Participants need to fit certain criteria as determined by the nature and purpose of research to be included in the group(s). They are therefore chosen because they share certain characteristics in relation to the topic of discussion. It is recommended that some groups be single gender groups whilst several other groups should have members with diverse or comparable characteristics in order to be able to undertake comparisons across groups. Focus groups with participants possessing diverse characteristics can bring interesting insights to the discussion. However, it should be emphasised that groups containing participants with the same characteristics are equally important and beneficial. Focus groups help in providing a better understanding of how people collectively perceive whatever issue is being researched on. The researcher plays a very active role in directing the discussion. The environment should be such that all participants are encouraged to share their understandings and experiences without being coerced into conforming with other participants’ responses. In essence, therefore, both homogeneity and heterogeneity are important elements of focus groups. It is understood that participants who share more or less the same qualities are most likely going to spend more time discussing the issue at hand than trying to explain themselves to each other (Greeff, 2005: 299, 304; Smithson, 2008: 359).

The number of focus groups was determined by the amount of new information the researcher would be able to continue gathering if more focus groups were to be conducted. When no new information was obtained (saturation), the researcher stopped conducting more focus groups. Both Greeff (2005: 306) and Morgan (2004: 276) mention that the number of groups depends on the research aims and purpose of study. They state that most projects consist of four to six groups, with the explanation that saturation had been reached. It is generally agreed that the first few



groups yield the greatest amount of new information, with the later ones tending to repeat much of what would have already been established. As a general principle one should not conduct too few focus groups since this may lead to premature conclusions whereas, along the same lines, one should not conduct too many for this will clearly be a waste of both time and money.

### **What are the advantages of focus groups?**

This study used the focus groups method because it offers many noted advantages. Focus groups permit researchers to observe a large amount of interaction on a specific topic in a short time (they have speedy results) (Smithson, 2008: 358; Babbie, 2004: 303). They are inexpensive (low in cost), data rich, flexible, stimulating to respondents, recall aiding, cumulative and elaborative (Fontana & Frey, 1994: 365; Babbie, 2004: 303); and are a socially oriented research method capturing real-life data in a social environment (Babbie, 2004: 303).

Moreover, focus groups require skills that are not entirely different from those which are used in individual interviews. According to Fontana and Frey (1994: 365), "The skills required of a group interviewer are not significantly different from those needed by an interviewer of individuals. The interviewer must be flexible, objective, empathic, persuasive, a good listener, and so on." This made it easier because the interviewer used the same skills in both individual interviews and in focus groups.

Establishing the communality of knowledge is one other great strength of focus groups. Smithson (2008: 359) asserts that "one of the perceived strengths of focus group methodology is the possibility for research participants to develop ideas collectively, bringing forward their own priorities and perspectives ..." It seems as if this method is self-regulating in a sense. Contrary to individual interviews where the interviewee is able to decide to give answers that he or she thinks the researcher wants to hear, focus groups offer a method in which participants can correct one another in such a way that the end result would be the group's understanding of the issue in question. According to Morgan (2004: 272), "what makes the discussion in focus groups more than the sum of separate individual interviews is the fact that the participants both query each other and explain themselves to each other". Consequently, "Focus groups are an excellent way to collect data on group norms and to find out what is (and is not) expressed in a group context" (Boeije 2010: 64).

Focus groups are unique. They give researchers direct access to the language and concepts participants use in making sense of their experiences (Smithson, 2008: 359).

Flexibility is a major strength that cannot be overemphasised. The interviewer or moderator does not have to follow a rigid set of questions. According to Smithson (2008: 360), “the focus group procedure is typically to follow a relatively unstructured interview guide, which generates a list of topics for discussion. The aim is to cover the topics set by the research agenda, but with some flexibility to allow related topics to emerge in this context. The focus group moderator (who may or may not be the researcher) guides the discussion, making sure that all topics are covered, and that all group members are given a chance to speak. Groups will ideally last from 1-2 hours.” This thesis, however, used a semi-structured interview guide instead of the unstructured one mentioned above.

### **What are the disadvantages of focus groups?**

Just as with any other method, focus groups have disadvantages or limitations. Smithson (2008: 368) notes that, “focus groups have specific dilemmas, both ethical and procedural, such as respect for individuals’ privacy, and the difficulties of dealing with inappropriate group behaviour (for example, insensitive comments or reactions to another participant’s contribution), as well as the more ubiquitous dilemmas of qualitative research concerning respect for participants’ voices, and concerns for misrepresenting the experiences and discussions of vulnerable groups.” The interviewer or moderator was careful to minimise the effect of such challenges to the use of focus groups.

Some of the focus group challenges are administrative in nature, like setting up and organising groups and obtaining the right number and mix of people in groups (Smithson, 2008: 358; Babbie, 2004: 303).

Fontana and Frey (1994: 365) note that, “the group interview is essentially a qualitative data gathering technique that finds the interviewer/moderator directing the interaction and inquiry in a very structured or very unstructured manner, depending on the interview’s purpose.” While this can be an advantage, it can also be a disadvantage. The richness of the data gathered depends quite significantly on the capability of the

interviewer or moderator to direct the interaction and inquiry in a way that provides the richness of data that is sought.

Some further disadvantages of the focus group method are that focus groups afford the researcher less control than individual interviews; data are difficult to analyse; and the discussion must be conducted in a conducive environment (Babbie, 2004: 303).

All the above disadvantages, however, do not outweigh the advantages of using focus groups as a tool for data collection in this research. The research therefore used focus groups while at the same time making sure that the disadvantages noted did not hamper the collection of rich data.

The two data collection methods discussed above were found to have been very useful in this study. It was exciting to find the two complementing each other in the many different ways mentioned above.

## **1.9 SAMPLING**

Sampling is a very important element to research. It has already been touched on in the previous section. According to Friesen (2010: 87), “Samples of populations are taken in order to reduce the considerable expense and difficulty of trying to collect information from every person in the entire population. A good sample represents the same proportions of people and opinions in the overall population”.

According to Boeije (2010: 35), “Although both procedures – random sampling and statistical inferences – do not apply to qualitative research, the term ‘sample’ is widely used in qualitative research terminology. A sample consists of the cases (units or elements) that will be examined and are selected from a defined research population. In qualitative research the sample is intentionally selected according to the needs of the study, commonly referred to as ‘purposive sampling’ or ‘purposeful selection’.” The participants were, therefore, selected taking into cognisance how much they were perceived to know about the Ndaou and their marriage practices.

The study made use of purposive sampling. It interviewed adults (18 years and above) who were considered to be knowledgeable as far as the Ndaou marriage practices were concerned. Saturation determined the population size. According to Corbin and

Strauss (2008: 143), “Saturation is usually explained in terms of “when no new data are emerging”. But saturation is more than a matter of no new data. It also denotes the development of categories in terms of their properties and dimensions, including variation, and if theory building, the delineating of relationships between concepts.”

The criteria for inclusion in the sample for this study was as follows:

- Elderly people who were considered to be well versed in the Ndau people’s marriage practices (older missionaries, older pastors, older Ndau).
- Married people, to obtain their understanding of marriage practices (the researcher visited churches and homes to interview married people)
- Unmarried people, to hear their views on marriage practices (the interviewer visited churches and homes to interview unmarried adults above the age of 18).

In total, 20 individual interviews and 5 focus group interviews were conducted in Zimbabwe between 18 April and 18 May 2016. Most of the participants were Ndau people, with the exception of Rev Haward Beckett, a retired SAGM missionary who still serves as a retired pastor in the United Baptist Church of Zimbabwe. The majority of the participants were interviewed in Chimanimani while others (although originally from Chimanimani) were interviewed in Harare, the country’s capital city. Tables 5.1 – 5.6 (in Chapter 5) present the demographic information of these participants, most of whom came from the United Baptist Church which is one of the biggest churches in Chimanimani, Zimbabwe. A more detailed profile of the study’s participants can be found in Chapter 5 under a section on the ‘Biographical Profile of the Participants’.

## **1.10 DATA ANALYSIS**

The data was recorded during fieldwork using a voice-recorder. It was then transcribed, coded, analysed, and presented in thesis chapters.

Data analysis is intrinsically linked to the purpose of the study. Naturally, therefore, analysis starts with revisiting the purpose of the research. Analysis in qualitative research has to do with examining and interpreting data in order to elicit meaning, gain understanding, and develop empirical knowledge (Corbin & Strauss, 2008: 1; Greef,

2005: 311). An independent coder was employed for this study to code the data based on the study's aims and objectives. The themes, sub-themes, categories, and sub-categories that were drawn up as a result of this process are presented in the research findings chapters of this thesis.

It is essential to note that although purposive sampling was made use of in identifying research participants, theoretical sampling was also utilised as the individual and focus groups interviews progressed. Theoretical sampling differs from other sampling methods in that it is responsive to data as opposed to being established at the beginning of research. This makes it open and flexible. Concepts and questions derived from data during analysis drive the next round of data collection. In this sense, the research process feeds on itself (Corbin & Strauss, 2008: 144).

From the above, it can be emphasised that concepts form the basis of analysis. Irrespective of the aim of the study (descriptive or theory), analysis refers to concepts that are sampled in data. The data obtained from participants tell us about those concepts. In sampling theoretically, researchers choose places, people, and contexts that offer insights about the concepts they want investigating. Theoretical sampling samples concepts, not people. It is important to note that analysis begins even as data starts to be collected in the field. Unlike in other sampling methods, the researcher does not wait until the end of data collection to begin with the analysis. Analysis begins after the first day of data gathering. I found this to be very useful in my research. Transcribing and thinking through the data obtained, before moving to the next interview, helped generate questions that the next interviews would seek to answer. Only saturation stops this ongoing process. Saturation, in this context, refers to a point in research when all the concepts are well defined and explained (Corbin & Strauss, 2008: 144-145).

Purposive sampling and theoretical sampling are therefore quite similar in the sense that they are irrefutably selective in their application. While purposive sampling selects participants 'on purpose', Corbin and Strauss (2008: 145) assert that "With theoretical sampling, there is the flexibility to go where analysis indicates would be the most fruitful place to collect more data that will answer the questions that arise during analysis. Of course, the researcher begins a study with a general target population and continues to sample from that group." The interrelatedness of data collection and data analysis

is a crucial element to note here. One interview or one focus group informs or rather equips the researcher to determine how he or she will conduct the following ones. The prompts that the researcher will make use of in later interviews are significantly influenced by the responses the participants gave in preceding interviews. As such, data analysis is not completely divorced from data collection.

In the light of the above, it can be reiterated that theoretical sampling is based on the premise that data collection and analysis go hand in hand. Subsequent interviews and questions asked in these are based on data collected in preceding interviews. The researcher and the data are integrated in the process. The direction the research takes depends upon findings from data and the analyst's interpretation of the latter (Corbin & Strauss, 2008: 144, 147-148).

### **1.11 DATA VERIFICATION**

It is important that the researcher proves that the research was conducted in a trustworthy manner. The use of an independent coder and the fact that the researcher, the coder, and the supervisor(s) agree on the trustworthiness of the research is critical. Literature control was also be used to verify data.

While objectivity has been found to be elusive, the researcher should at least aim for sensitivity. Objectivity in data collection and analysis has come to be understood as a myth. Scholars admit that researchers bring with them their particular paradigms, including perspectives and biases. Sensitivity is encouraged. It stands in contrast to objectivity. Sensitivity requires that the researcher immerses himself/herself into the research. It has to do with being insightful, being in tandem with, and being able to identify pertinent issues and findings in data. There is a sense in which sensitivity means being able to present the participants' views, not overpowering them by one's own presuppositions and biases. The researcher should allow the data to 'speak'. In the end, it is acknowledged that research findings are a result of data *plus* what the researcher brings to the analysis (Corbin & Strauss, 2008: 32, 33).

Literature control, as mentioned above, is a very good method of verifying data. Corbin and Strauss (2008: 38) assert that, "When an investigator has finished his or her data collection and analysis and is in the writing stage, the literature can be used to confirm

findings, and just the reverse, findings can be used to illustrate where the literature is incorrect, simplistic, or only partially explains phenomena. Bringing the literature into the writing not only demonstrates scholarship, but also allows for extending, validating, and refining knowledge in the field.” The application of this literature control principle will be found in Chapters 5 to 7 of this thesis.

To underline the importance of sensitivity, Corbin and Strauss (2008: 41) mention that, “sensitivity enables researchers to present participants’ stories with an equal mix of abstraction, detailed description, and, just as important, feeling.”

## **1.12 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

Ethical considerations are an indispensable element of any qualitative study. This research followed all Unisa guidelines and regulations on research ethics. The research was therefore carried out in a way that satisfied the stipulations of Unisa policy. Ethical clearance was sought and obtained from the Unisa College of Human Sciences ethics committee.

The privacy of the participants was respected in the research. Care was taken not to share in any other way the information that participants revealed for purposes of the research. Confidentiality and anonymity were guaranteed and pseudonyms and codes replaced names and any other information that could expose the participants. No actual or real names were used in the transcription, coding, analysis and presentation of data. Any information that could potentially reveal the participants’ identity was withheld. The participants were informed about the possible risks that might be associated with participating in the study although there was not much to this effect. The researcher did not seek to deceive the participants in any way. They were made to understand that their participation was voluntary and that they could choose to stop participating at any stage in the research process. Informed consent forms were signed by each participant, indicating that they volunteered to participate without any form of force or coercion. The researcher understands that he has an ethical obligation to his colleagues to analyse the data and present the findings in a faithful manner (Boeije 2010: 43-73; Babbie 2004: 61-69; Friesen 2010: 111-119; Strydom 2005: 56-69; de Vos 2005: 335; Corbin & Strauss, 2008: 30-31).

### **1.13 CLARIFICATION OF KEY TERMS AND/OR CONCEPTS**

The following key terms or concepts are to be utilised in this study: religion; ethnicity and identity; marriage as a rite of passage; and social stratification.

#### **1.13.1 Religion**

Braun (2000: 4) mentions that there are too many meanings for 'religion'. He also mentions that religion can be defined with greater or lesser success. The term therefore cannot be defined with precision. Religion has to do with practices of everyday life as well as beliefs concerning the transcendent and eternal. It is "a kind of human talk that can be differentiated from other human talk by its topical content and its rhetorical propensity" (Braun, 2000: 10). This thesis used the term 'religion' to refer to either Christianity or African religions and/or Ndaou religion.

The concept of 'religion' is an imported term among the Ndaou. This concurs with Isichei's (2004: 4) statement that, "African Languages had no word for 'religion'... Often, the closest synonym was something like 'the way of the ancestors'. This is also true of 'traditional' religions outside Africa... In African communities, religion was part and parcel of daily life." The African way of life was such that everything was intricately intertwined. An African's religiosity formed part of everything he or she did on an everyday basis. The Ndaou traditional marriage practices were considered in this thesis as part of the Ndaou religion especially because the ancestors were involved in the marriage rites.

According to Platvoet and Olupona (1996: 15), "The concept of 'religion' has, e.g., emerged quite recently from historical developments specific to Western societies, and need not necessarily be a good tool for the study of the religious aspects of societies with different cultural histories, such as the Islamic, or Eastern Asiatic, or Latin American ones, the deep assumptions of which about the very shape of religion differ considerably from the modern Western ones, and from each other..." This concurs with the above and, at the same time, buttresses the fact that what the missionaries perceived as 'religion' was informed by their own conception of religion. Chitando, Adogame and Bateye (2012: 1-2) submit that, "The academic study of religion has its roots outside the continent. The very category of religion itself has a European history... Overall, the academic study of religion in Africa is an imported product."



The thesis will proceed from an assumption that the Ndaus were religious even before their contact with the Westerners. The claims as to the absence of religion in Africa made by missionaries, travellers and explorers were, this thesis argues, deliberate. According to Chidester (2000: 428), “the discovery of an absence of religion obviously implied that European commentators in colonial situations were operating with an implicit definition of religion that was certainly informed by Christian assumptions about what counted as religion ... more significantly, however, the term “religion was used as an oppositional term on colonial frontiers”. For Watt (1983:179), “it is a historical accident that the earliest European students of foreign or primitive cultures used the term ‘religion’ for phenomena of which they had only a rudimentary knowledge and that they jumped to the conclusion that other cultures must have institutions of the same type and function as Christianity or Judaism in their own culture ... this premature assumption is at the root of the confusion.” This study acknowledges the historical fact that the Westerners originally denied any existence of ‘religion’ in Africa and therefore they labelled almost everything African as barbaric, heathen, savage, among others. The term ‘religion’ will be used to denote both African/Ndaus religion and Christianity in this study. Spickard (2011: 340) asserts that “religion is more than just concepts; it has an experiential dimension as well.” It is the experiential side of religion that this thesis sought to explore, particularly as it manifests itself in the Ndaus marriage practices.

On the subject of the initial denial of any existence of ‘religion in Africa, Platvoet (1996: 46) argues that this marginalisation and/or denial was in order to legitimate the colonisation of Africa. Westerlund (1985: 87-88) mentions that derogatory terms like ‘animism’ and ‘fetishism’, as well as ‘ancestor worship’ were used by Western scholars to ridicule any form of African religion or religiosity. Their was to privilege their own ‘religion’ and to perpetuate their own hidden agendas.

### **1.13.2 Ethnicity and Identity**

The ethnicity, history and identity of the Ndaus were an invaluable resource in understanding their world and their marriage practices. Just as MacGonagle (2007:

25) considers the concepts of ethnicity, identity and history in her book, *Crafting Identity in Zimbabwe and Mozambique*, ethnicity and identity were utilised in the current study. The history of the Ndaou people sheds light on the Ndaou identity and further assists one in understanding their marriage practices. Not much has been written about the Ndaou and their identity in particular. Elizabeth MacGonagle is the only scholar who has attempted to tackle the question of identity among the Ndaou, as the second chapter of this thesis will show. While MacGonagle's research on the Ndaou and their identity (2007) was on a much broader scale, the scope of this study limits the question of Ndaou identity to some parts of Chimanimani only.

This study attempted to demonstrate how Ndaou identity has changed or developed over time. According to MacGonagle (2007: 3), "...identities are not static – they change in intriguing ways and often shift in a slow, imperceptible manner. Despite their fluid nature, cultural identities derive from somewhere in the past." As MacGonagle (2007; 2008) and Vijfhuizen (2002) attempt to indicate, the Ndaou people have a long history and their identity was 'crafted' over this lengthy period.

It is necessary to note that, although ethnic groupings are widely acknowledged in Zimbabwe today, scholars such as Ranger (1985: 4) argue that before 1890 people did not call themselves 'Manyika', 'Zezuru', 'Karanga', 'Kalanga' (or Ndaou; or even Shona) in the same sense these terms are used today. People at that time did not think of themselves as belonging to a 'tribe' or an 'ethnicity', but defined themselves politically – as subjects of a particular chief – rather than linguistically, or culturally or ethnically.

The terms 'tribe', mentioned above, and 'clan' were used in the study as concepts related to ethnicity. Africans often view the term 'tribe' as pejorative and tend to favour 'ethnic group'. The *Merriam-Webster Dictionary* defines tribe as "a social group comprising numerous families, clans, or generations together with slaves, dependents, or adopted strangers" while *Dictionary.com* defines clan as "a group of people of common descent; family". It can be deduced here that a clan is a smaller unit while a tribe is a much bigger unit. The study will show that people belonging to the same clan share totems and are not supposed to marry each other, especially among the Ndaou of Chimanimani, Zimbabwe. A tribe is, therefore, a coming together of different clans and different families within those clans.

### **1.13.3 Marriage as a Rite of Passage**

It is as a rite of passage that marriage was treated in this study. 'Rites of passage' is a concept that is widely used to refer to the different stages that a human being passes through from birth to death. These include birth, puberty, marriage and death. More details will be furnished in Chapter 2 when Van Gennep, Turner, and others are discussed.

The term has a long history. According to Cox (1998: x), the term 'Rites of Passage' has been employed widely since the publication of the book of the same title in 1908 by the French anthropologist Arnold van Gennep to refer to a ritual process shared by life cycle rituals and calendrical rituals.

Every individual goes through a series of passages. There are implicit transitions in the various realms of a person's life. Transitions range from group to group, from one social situation to the next. Life therefore is characterised by a succession of stages: birth, puberty, marriage, fatherhood and motherhood, advancement to a higher class, occupational specialisation, and death. All these and others are accompanied by ceremonies which enable the individual to pass from one position to another, which is equally well defined (Van Gennep, 1908: 202).

### **1.13.4 Social Stratification**

The concept of social stratification was also treated in this study. Church weddings, to a very great extent, seem to be easier for a few church members to celebrate but not for others. This in itself causes polarisation among the Ndau: between those who can afford a church wedding and those who cannot. Details on social stratification are provided in the second chapter of this thesis as argued, for example, by Feidler (1998).

Religion would seem, in its very nature, to be very divisive. Benavides (2000: 297) mentions that, "religious practices and representations appear to have as their function to provide the ultimate validation for the creation and the maintenance of the most tenacious differences..." Benavides (2000: 298) notes that there is a connection between religion and the establishing of differences, just as there is a distinction between the sacred and the profane in the Latin term *religio* which suggests setting

apart (*relegere* or *religere*). He (2000: 298) also notes: “When social inequality begins to emerge, it becomes reinforced by the tendency to distinguish, and then to rank, in both lateral and vertical terms ...”

Chapter 2 will further explore the issue of social stratification regarding church weddings. It will be seen in the chapters on the research findings (Chapters 5 to 7) that social stratification is rife among Ndaou Christians when it comes to marriage issues.

## 1.14 STRUCTURE OF THE THESIS

This thesis is divided into the following eight chapters:

1. **Introduction and General Orientation to the Study.** This chapter provides a general introduction to the thesis. It delineates the area of investigation, research problem and research question, justification, aim of the study and objectives. In addition, research methodology and data collection methods are included in this chapter. Sampling, data analysis, data verification, ethical considerations, clarification of key terms and/or concepts, as well as an outline of thesis chapters are likewise contained in this chapter.
2. **Literature Review.** This chapter details what other scholars have to say about the issue in question and other related issues. In doing this the chapter exposes the research gaps that this thesis seeks to address.
3. **Chapter 3 gives an orientation and/or background to the Ndaou people of Chimanimani, Zimbabwe, to facilitate an understanding of the research findings chapters.** It is presented from a postcolonial perspective in line with the thesis’ paradigm of study.
4. **Chapter 4 gives an orientation and/or background to the SAGM Missionaries who evangelised the Ndaou people of Chimanimani in order to situate the study and to prepare for the research findings chapters that follow.** Like Chapter 3, it is presented from a postcolonial perspective in line with

the thesis' paradigm of study. Quotes from primary sources will be integrated with this chapter.

5. **Chapter 5 and subsequent chapters were devoted to the presentation of the Research Findings and Literature Control.** Chapter 5 constitutes Part 1 of 3 parts presented each in a separate chapter. Chapter 5 will furnish an introduction to research findings and literature control. It, in addition, provides biographical profiles of all the participants. Thereafter, it introduces the themes emerging from the data and goes on to present the first theme.
6. **Research Findings and Literature Control – Part 2.** Chapter 6 discusses the next four themes emerging from the data.
7. **Research Findings and Literature Control – Part 3.** Chapter 7 considers the last two themes emerging from the data.
8. **Summaries, Conclusion and Recommendations.** This final chapter draws conclusions and makes recommendations.

## **1.15 CONCLUSION**

Chapter 1 offered a general introduction and orientation to the study. It presented the area of investigation, research problem and research question, justification, aim of study, and objectives of the study. Issues of research methodology and data collection methods were likewise treated. Towards the end, the chapter turned to issues of sampling, data analysis, data verification, ethical considerations, clarification of key terms and/or concepts, and structure of the thesis. It was established in this chapter that the research is qualitative in nature and that it will employ both phenomenology and postcolonialism. Phenomenology was used in collecting the data whereas postcolonialism was the research paradigm for this study. In other words, the data that was collected using phenomenological methods was analysed and presented from a postcolonial hybrid perspective. As stated within the chapter, postcolonial theory investigates, and develops propositions about the cultural and political impact of

European conquest upon colonised societies, and the nature of those societies' responses. In doing this, it exposes power relations in these colonial encounters. Individual and focus group interviews were identified as the data collection methods. Both purposive and theoretical sampling were discussed. Chapter 1 underlined the need for trustworthiness in research and the place of literature control in the research findings chapters. Ethical considerations were also noted, including anonymity, confidentiality, and informed consent. Religion, ethnicity and identity, marriage as a rite of passage, and social stratification were considered as well. Chapter 2 turns now to a treatment of other scholars' contributions to the issue in question and other related issues, with the intention of locating research gaps that this thesis will attempt to fill.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter offers a literature review. It presents findings by scholars regarding the marriage issue in question and other related issues with the intention to locate research gaps that the thesis aims to fill. Different subtopics will be used in this chapter to present the contributions of various academics. These subtopics will cover African Indigenous Religions and Worldviews, Ndaue Ethnic Identities, Marriage, Missionaries in Zimbabwe, Laws, and Problematic areas. African Indigenous Religions and Worldviews will contain two subpoints: African Indigenous Religions and Worldviews. Ndaue Ethnic Identities will discuss four subpoints: Identity, Ndaue people, Ethnicity, and Research on the Ndaue. Rites of passage and Ndaue marriage ceremonies will comprise two subpoints under Marriage. Missionaries in Zimbabwe offers six subpoints all covering different aspects related to missionaries in Zimbabwe. South African Marriage Laws and Zimbabwean Marriage Laws will be the two subpoints under Laws. Problematic areas will consider five subpoints: Polygamy/Polygyny, Church Weddings, Bridewealth, Social Stratification, and Abolishment of Church Weddings. The literature review presented herein will serve to acknowledge the contributions of scholars, to show how this study fits in with what has already been done, to indicate how significant this research is going to be and to demonstrate that this research will lead to new knowledge (Hofstee, 2006: 91). Following the study's paradigm, the current chapter will be presented from a postcolonial perspective.

#### **2.2 AFRICAN INDIGENOUS RELIGIONS AND WORLDVIEWS**

##### **2.2.1 African Indigenous Religions**

The current thesis is a project in African indigenous religions, specifically on how these intersect and co-exist with Christianity on the African continent and in Chimanimani, Zimbabwe, in particular. Misconceptions about Africans and African Religions in particular by Westerners were characteristic of colonialism. Much has been written about this by scholars from different disciplines and backgrounds, among them

Mugambi (1989: 40-42), Thorpe (1991: 2-3), and Olowola (1993: 8). The impact of the Westerners' perceptions and actions is still present in Africa long after colonialism has been put to rest.

According to Long (2004: 89), "... 'indigenous', from the Latin, means literally being born from within, which leads to the notion of being produced or living naturally in a particular region." Indigenous religions in this sense would refer to religions that were produced naturally in Zimbabwe as opposed to those that were imported like Christianity, Islam, among others.

'Indigenous' is, however, not to be confused with 'autochthonous'. The Shona and/or Ndau are understood to be 'indigenous' but not necessarily 'autochthonous' in Zimbabwe. Bullock (1950: 9) asserts that, "The great bulk of the people of this Colony [Zimbabwe], however, are Bantu whom we call officially the indigenous Natives, although... they are not the autochthonous inhabitants." The Shona and/or Ndau are not autochthons in Zimbabwe because, as shall be seen later in this study, they formed part of the Bantu people who migrated southwards in Africa, displacing the San in the process. According to Cox (2013: 13-14) "Restricting the term indigenous to autochthonous populations is neither necessary nor is it desirable...". This is because that would be overlooking "the fact that populations around the globe for centuries have migrated and have conquered lands, oftentimes displacing those who were living originally in the region".

European scholars perceived African indigenous religions as primitive and held Christianity to be superior. In other words, the African and his or her worldview were viewed as inferior to the Westerner and to her or his worldview. The Westerner viewed the African as having been incapable of "producing meaningful, sophisticated religious traditions" and as one who lacked "true knowledge" of a Supreme God. Whatever would suggest anything to the contrary was said to have originated anywhere else but in Africa. These "diffusionist" views usually pointed to the great Mediterranean as the origins of African civilization (Olupona, 2014: xx).

Mohawk (2004: 117) mentions that indigenous cultural values and religious traditions were devalued in the West simply because they were not part of the discourse of the West. He adds that they did not qualify for serious consideration. He further asserts that, "Since these indigenous traditions do not support, enhance, or otherwise further



the projects of Western domination, they are treated as though they are of no value at all.”

Such belittling of the African’s mind had far reaching consequences. Almost everything that was African was ‘second best’ if anything good was found in it at all. In most cases, everything African had to be discarded. This applied to numerous African practices, marriage included. The African’s marriage practices were regarded as evil, especially polygynous marriages and the *roora* system.

In the light of the above, Olupona (2014: xxi) notes that early scholarship on Africa and African religions reflected a pernicious racism that hindered any appreciation of anything African.

Contrary to misconceptions about African religions, mostly by some Western scholars who perceived African religions as a homogenous entity throughout Africa, Olupona (2014: 1) asserts that African religions are as diverse as the continent itself. He goes on to say, “Africa is home to more than fifty countries, nearly every form of ecological niche found on Earth, and hundreds of ethnic groups who together speak more than a thousand languages. It is not surprising ... that this enormous range of peoples, cultures and modes of living would be reflected in a diverse range of religious expressions” (Olupona, 2014: 1; Idowu, 1973b: 82). Olupona (2004: 18) also mentions that “Across the globe, hundreds of indigenous cultures have developed their particular responses to modernity, based upon the dynamic characteristics and histories of the indigenous peoples.” In the light of the above, it is of no use to lump everything in Africa as belonging to a homogeneous African religion. Each one of the African indigenous cultures needs to be understood in its own right. Consequently, this thesis will limit itself to the Nda of Chimanimani to avoid overgeneralising.

It ought to be mentioned, however, that there is no agreement among African scholars themselves as to whether to use the singular or plural form in referring to indigenous African religious traditions. Some concentrate on what is common among the African Indigenous Religions and call for the use of the singular form (African Indigenous Religion) while others emphasise the differences and advocate for the use of the plural form (Shorter, 1997: 562-578; Thorpe, 1991: 3-4; Shoko, 2012: 53-54). This thesis identifies with both positions. It admits the fact that there are similarities in African religious traditions but there are likewise unique characteristics in each of them that

warrant a treatment of them as separate units. Both the singular and plural forms will be used in this thesis in the light of this understanding. The thesis nonetheless leans more towards the singular form with the view that Ndaou Indigenous Religion ought to be viewed, understood and appreciated as an entity on its own that, although sharing common characteristics with other African Indigenous traditions, is unique to a great extent.

It should be noted that African Indigenous Religion(s) have been traditionally called 'African Traditional Religions'. The 'traditional' has been dropped by progressive scholars because it suggests that African Religions are 'static' and/or unchanging and backward or primitive. On the contrary, African indigenous religion(s) are as dynamic as African cultural traditions. The study of these African religions has evolved from the the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries where extended accounts were written by travellers, missionaries, and settler colonialists to the current era where African scholars have taken up writing about their own indigenous religious traditions. Accounts by the former were characteristically negative in outlook (Ray, 1976: 2-3; Cox, 2013: 3; Shoko, 2012: 54, 63; Shoko, 2007: xiii; Idowu, 1973b: x, xi, 85-86; Thomas, 2005: 131, 180; Isichei, 2004: 4; Platvoet, 1996: 51; Westerlund, 2006: 2; Westerlund, 1985: 89; Bourdillon, 1973: 11).

### **2.2.2 Worldviews**

Many scholars acknowledge that the Westerners failed to realise that Africa was different compared to their European ways of life. They were quick to judge. The European ways of life became a yardstick by which all was to be measured. Anything that did not conform or showed any signs of deviating from the traditions known to them was suspect and had to be condemned and or advocated against.

The worldview of the African(s) pertaining to religious issues is very different to that of the Westerners. By 'Westerners' this thesis refers to the wider European understanding or perception and not, as some may want to argue, that of European peasants and others of a low social status that may identify with what is said to be the African worldview in this thesis. Olupona (2014: 1) asserts that religious worldviews reflect people's identities and determine how they relate to one another and to the

world at large. He adds that these religious worldviews encode, as well as influence, ethical practices, taboos, and the knowledge particular to each group. The mention of identity here is noteworthy for this concept will remain critical throughout the study.

The fact that religion permeates all aspects of an African's everyday life stands in contrast to the dichotomy and/or separation that characterise European and American societies. African religious worldviews are interconnected with economics and politics without a clear separation between the sacred and the profane (Olupona, 2014: 1). This is why, as indicated, Mbiti argues that Africans are notoriously religious since religion permeates all aspects of their existence (Mbiti, 1989: 1-3; Ochieng-Odhiambo, 2010: 40-41; Shorter, 1997: 563; Thorpe, 1991: 52; Mugambi, 1989: 141; Cox, 2000: 231). For adherents of African traditional religions, the dichotomy is neither desirable nor possible. Religious beliefs pervade every other aspect of life including birth, puberty, marriage and death, family dynamics, diet, dress and beauty, health care, governance and all other areas. Religion in Africa thus permeates the daily affairs and conduct of African societies (Olupona, 2014: 2).

## **2.3 NDAU ETHNIC IDENTITIES**

### **2.3.1 Identity**

The question of identity is a central concept that this study will have to grapple with. The identity of the Ndaou people will be discussed at length in Chapter 3. Not much has been written about these people and their identity in particular. Elizabeth MacGonagle, as already indicated, is the only scholar who has attempted to extensively tackle the question of identity among them.

MacGonagle (2007: vii) mentions that her book, *Crafting Identity in Zimbabwe and Mozambique*, began as a dissertation on history and identity in the Ndaou region. She carried out fieldwork in Mozambique, Zimbabwe, and Portugal in the 1990s. In Zimbabwe, the researcher went about in and around Chikore and Chimanimani. She travelled to Vhimba, a village in Chimanimani on the border with Mozambique where she undertook fieldwork (MacGonagle, 2007: viii). It should be noted that her research on the Ndaou and on their identity was on a much broader scale. The scope of the

current study limits the question of Ndaou identity to some parts of the Chimanimani District only.

MacGonagle (2007: 1) took much interest in issues of identity formation. She asserts that her study examines the complicated and ambiguous process of identity formation over several centuries in a corner of southeast Africa, in the region of eastern Zimbabwe and central Mozambique. She notes that the Ndaou people drew on cultural, social, and political aspects and in the process crafted a sense of Ndauness between 1500 and 1900. According to MacGonagle (2007: 1), the histories and material culture that shaped this sense of identity form the subject of her book. Houghton (2016) defines material culture as “physical objects, resources, and spaces that people use to define their culture.”

The term ‘identity’ is a complex one. MacGonagle (2007: 2) admits that writing about identity gives rise to questions about the concept itself. Identity may mean different things to different people and might sometimes not mean anything at all. MacGonagle, however, admits that identity still means something to many, and as such she was not prepared to abandon the term. Although the concept of identity is imprecise and full of baggage, she notes that substitutes such as self-understanding, identification, or groupness have their weaknesses as well (MacGonagle, 2007: 2). For the lack of a better term, identity will be used throughout this study as well.

Identities have a story and a meaning behind them. They are therefore able to make a contribution to history. MacGonagle defines identity as a broad sense of group belonging, or being something. “Being something” is relational and opposed to the existence of an “other”. In other words, the identities of a group of people exist “in a context of oppositions and relativities” since groups classify “others” during their own acts of self-identification (MacGonagle, 2007: 2).

As MacGonagle (2007: 3) notes, identities are dynamic. They change “in intriguing ways and often shift in a slow, imperceptible manner”. Though fluid, cultural identities have long histories. This study, therefore, will attempt to show how Ndaou identity has changed or developed over time.

Identities are not easily confined in close settings. They cross over boundaries. The Ndaou identities are exactly like this and Chapter 3 of the current thesis will explore this

further. Ndauness crosses temporal, geographic, and theoretical boundaries. MacGonagle notes that a sense of being Ndaun continues to exist into the present irrespective of colonial histories, postcolonial trajectories, and official languages in Zimbabwe and Mozambique (MacGonagle, 2007: 3).

Rennie (1973: 27) mentions that identity is defined in terms of one's place in relation to the world and to other social groups. This buttresses what MacGonagle wrote about the relational nature of identities in opposition to others. Rennie adds that identity is maintained and transmitted by a system of symbols, behavioural, verbal, and 'historical' (i.e. mythology). The arrival of whites altered both identity and values in African contexts. Rennie submits that, "to an existing series of identities were added at least two more – 'Christian' and 'African' or 'black'". These additions are at the centre of the current research. The Ndaun, in Chimanimani, has a daily struggle of juggling between the different identities that he or she finds himself or herself entangled in: "Ndaun-African-Black-Christian".

An individual is not tied to one single identity at all times. An ethnic identity, for example, is merely a small fraction of the many identities in which an African finds himself or herself in the postcolonial politics of everyday life. Underlining the multiplicity of identities, one can talk of 'plurality of contested arenas' and/or 'multiple shifting identities'. In the light of this, identities ought to be understood as complex and multiple. They grow out of a history of changing responses to economic, political, and cultural forces almost always in opposition to other identities. Acknowledging that one cannot speak of a single 'tribal' identity it should be reiterated that most Africans move in and out of multiple identities. At one moment they are subject to a chief, at another moment they are part of this clan, and yet at another moment they belong to this or that professional guild (Werbner, 1996: 1; Appiah, 1992: 178; Ranger, 1983: 248).

### **2.3.2 Ndaun people**

As mentioned, MacGonagle (2007; 2008) and Vijfhuizen (2002) attempt to show that the Ndaun people have a long history during which their identity was 'crafted'. Ndaun speakers came to be called Ndaun long before the arrival of formal colonialism in the late nineteenth century. The relationship between social identity and political power

can be traced as far back as the fifteenth century to reveal how intriguing historical factors led to shifts in Ndauness before the arrival of missionaries and colonial officials on the continent (MacGonagle, 2007: 1).

Stemming from her research, MacGonagle (2007: 1) mentions that the shared Ndau identity that emerged in twentieth-century Zimbabwe and Mozambique stems from a long period of transformation. She considers the period between 1500 and 1900 and demonstrates how the Ndau crafted a collective identity long before formal European colonialism.

Ndau people are called lowlanders or river-valley dwellers (Rennie, 1973: 86). They are also called 'people of the *gova*', i.e. dry river valley. Among other suggested etymologies, the Ndau believe that the origin of the word Ndau comes from a greeting. As people enter a homestead they call in greeting 'knock, knock, knock' (*go-go-go*). The people in the homestead respond: '*ndauwe*', a greeting and an invitation of welcome to the homestead. Ndau literally means 'place'. Hence, 'Ndau' would seem to be related to the greeting and response '*ndauwe*'. This is one of possibly many other explanations as to why this group of 'lowveld' Shona people were labelled Ndau, long before the 'White' Europeans came to Zimbabwe around 1890 (Vijfhuizen, 2002: 17).

For the Ndau, marriage is important because it allows the *dzinza* (patrikin) to grow; creates children; and provides security (*kuchengetwa*) in old age (Vijfhuizen, 2002: 20). Chapters 3 and 5 will further explore the importance of marriage among the Ndau.

### **2.3.2.1 The Ndau setting**

Most of the several million inhabitants living between the Pungwe and Save Rivers, two waterways that originate in Zimbabwe and flow eastward through Mozambique on their way to the Indian Ocean, speak a dialect of the Shona language called Ndau (MacGonagle, 2007: 3).

The terms 'Shona' and 'Ndau' were not originally used by those who are referred to by these terms to allude to themselves. The Portuguese, who left an extensive written record about the region between Pungwe and Save Rivers, also did not use either Shona or Ndau in their early precolonial vocabularies. Both words came into use only

in the nineteenth century, before formal colonialism took hold under the Portuguese in Mozambique and under the British in Southern Rhodesia, now Zimbabwe (MacGonagle, 2007: 3).

Yet, a common identity was evident in the unified linguistic and cultural history of those in the east who spoke what came to be called the Nda language (MacGonagle, 2007: 3). MacGonagle (2007: 3) asserts that her work reconstructs how the Nda formed and maintained a sense of being Nda over the *longue durée*.

When the Portuguese established a presence along the Mozambican coast at Sofala in the sixteenth century (in 1505), the population living between the Save and Zambezi Rivers spoke several dialects of the Bantu language known today as Shona (MacGonagle, 2007: 4).

Local inhabitants had their own terms of self-identification that included not only Karanga for the northern plateau region, but also more specific names such as Teve, Danda, and Sanga for areas in the east and southeast (MacGonagle, 2007: 5). Yet, despite these local names of territories that in turn became separate polities, a sense of collective identity among eastern Shona speakers was acknowledged by early Portuguese observers when they used the term Karanga to refer to the peoples along the coast and in the Sofala hinterland (MacGonagle, 2007: 5).

MacGonagle follows current practice and refers to the larger Shona-speaking group as the Shona people, but her focus is on those who live in the eastern region and speak a distinct version of Shona known as Nda. A majority of people in Zimbabwe and a considerable number of Mozambicans living between the Zambezi and Save Rivers speak the language called Shona. Shona is neither an apt ethnic or “tribal” label, but its usage as a blanket term usually implies that being Shona means speaking the same language, having similar cultural traditions, and experiencing a shared history. Shona is an accepted linguistic term that identifies speakers of the Shona language, which falls within the south-central zone of the Bantu language group. Nda is one of six main dialects of Shona, and in the wider region language is often equated with ethnicity (MacGonagle, 2007: 5-10).

Missionaries and colonial officials drew language borders and demarcated dialect territories in many parts of Africa (MacGonagle, 2007: 11). According to Bourdillon

(1976: 15), “One early consequence of colonial settlement was the drawing of the boundary between Portuguese East Africa and the British colony of Southern Rhodesia. This boundary was negotiated in Lisbon and London with little regard for the Shona peoples resident in the border areas. The boundary sometimes separated related groups of Shona peoples resident in border areas.” Six main Shona “Dialect Groups” are normally distinguished: Nda, Manyika, Korekore, Zezuru, Karanga, and Kalanga. Three of these classifications (Nda, Manyika and Korekore) stretched into Mozambique, which was the colony of Portuguese East Africa. Within each area there were also dialects. For example, among the Nda cluster, there are Nda, Danda and Shanga (MacGonagle, 2007:14).

The Nda spoken in various zones is different (MacGonagle, 2007: 14). The Nda spoken in Chimanimani is lighter compared to the one spoken in the border areas of the neighbouring Chipinge district. Nda itself is significantly different from the other Shona dialects. Bourdillon (1976: 17) attributes this distinction to “... possibly ... the influence of the Shangaan invaders...” It is important to reiterate, as indicated above, that Nda is itself not a homogeneous dialect. In saying the Nda in Chimanimani is lighter, I mean it is not exactly the same as that spoken in Chipinge district. The latter is much closer to Mozambican Nda than it is to the rest of the Zimbabwean dialects. The former, however, sits somewhere in between the rest of the Shona dialects and the Mozambican Nda.

Just as the label Shona has ambiguous origins, the exact derivation of the term Nda is also unclear. Whenever the term originated, Nda was not widely used to designate a specific people until the nineteenth century (MacGonagle, 2007: 16). The two groups of Nda and Danda were not always that different, and over time the Danda came to be Nda as well. In the highland region, there are Nda known as either Nda, Garwe, Sanga, or Tomboji along the Zimbabwe-Mozambique border. Lowland Nda near the Indian Ocean coast are called Danda or Shanga. Northern neighbours of the Nda identify as Manica or Teve and speak Shona dialects of the same name (MacGonagle, 2007: 17). While it is indisputable that Nda covers a much broader space than just the Chimanimani District, as has been mentioned this study focuses on the Nda in some parts of Chimanimani only.



Shoko (2007: 2) asserts that, “The meaning of the term ‘Shona’ is very controversial. It derives from the designation ‘*Svina*’, which means ‘dirty’, introduced by the Ndebele to scold the Shona captives... Initially the Shona did not like the use of this term, but the Europeans adopted it and applied it to all dialectical groups namely the Zezuru in the central part of the country, the Korekore in the north, the Karanga in the south, the Manyika in the east, the Ndaou in the southeast and the Kalanga in the southwest.” What Shoko argues here concurs with what Rayner (1962: 41) had to say. He submits that Shona “do not seem to have had any definitive name for themselves in the past” and that, “The word ‘*MaShona*’ has been imposed on them. It is supposed to come from the contemptuous Matabele name for them, *Ama-Svina*, meaning The *Unwashed ones*, though this derivation is uncertain. In the past they are said to have resented the name, but that is not true any longer. Today they have accepted it as a generic term suggesting their relatedness and use it to encourage a sense of solidarity...” (Rayner, 1962: 41).

### **2.3.2.2 Ndaou History**

The Ndaou had to endure much subjugation in their long history of identity formation. The history of Ndaou speakers is rooted in a common group of people who have endured various hegemonies while maintaining their own local traditions (MacGonagle, 2007: 107). When speaking about history long ago (*kare kare*), many Ndaou in central Mozambique and eastern Zimbabwe recall a past marked by a shifting political and cultural terrain of invasion and domination in the nineteenth century (MacGonagle, 2008: 29). This turbulent period, known by many as a time of terror, began with the migrations of several northern Nguni peoples, most notably the Gaza Nguni, who first settled in the Ndaou heartland in the 1830s and returned later for an extended occupation from 1862 to 1889 (MacGonagle, 2008: 29). Although the Gaza Nguni will be treated here, Chapter 3 will more fully discuss the Gaza Nguni and their influence on the Ndaou.

Most of the population in this corner of southeast Africa (between Zimbabwe’s eastern highlands and the Mozambican coast) submitted to Gaza Nguni overrule and came to be known as Ndaou partly in response to the presence of these outsiders (MacGonagle, 2008: 29). This conquest by the Gaza Nguni in the nineteenth century acted as a foil

for the Ndaus to recreate their identity and assume a sense of Ndauness with a powerful salience that reverberated into the twentieth century. In the shadow of the Gaza Nguni leader Ngungunyana, both women and men were actively involved in shaping Ndaus landscapes of memory and giving them meaning. A wave of common suffering at the hands of the Nguni reinforced a sense of being Ndaus as previous exchanges had not (MacGonagle, 2008: 29-30).

According to MacGonagle (2008:30), even though identities are often messy and muddled the concept of identity expresses a broad sense of group belonging, or being something. This state is relational and opposed to the existence of an “other”. Thus, the identities of a particular people exist “in a context of oppositions and relativities” as groups classify others during their own acts of self-identification. Identities are not static, for they change in intriguing ways and are subject to numerous influences. They have a story and a meaning behind them that complicates the history of identity making. Despite their fluid nature, identities derive from somewhere in the past (MacGonagle, 2008: 31). As a group, the Ndaus came to recognise a common ethnic identity, or an awareness that one could label (carelessly) as tribal, in response to shared cultural experiences and the presence of an other. Overruled by the Gaza Nguni in the nineteenth century triggered a new belief in and a new meaning of being Ndaus (MacGonagle, 2008: 32).

MacGonagle (2008: 33) notes that the difficult period and “problem” that the Ndaus attribute to Ngungunyana actually began two generations before his time with the arrival of Ngungunyana’s grandfather, Soshangane (Manukosi). He was one leader among several groups of Nguni-speaking migrants fleeing disturbances in Natal associated with the rise of the Zulu state in South Africa. These Nguni speakers first reached the area of central Mozambique and eastern Zimbabwe inhabited by the Ndaus in the 1820s.

The Ndaus see their common history of suffering and perseverance as a key aspect of their shared cultural experience – a past bound up with making meaning out of memories and identities (MacGonagle, 2008: 49).

According to Rennie (1973: 35), the Ndaus place their past in three divisions: society before the Gaza Nguni invasions from the south, society under the Gaza state, and society under white colonial rule. In each of these periods, Ndaus society showed quite

distinct structural features. Rennie's submission concurs with Murphree's (1969: 3) assertion that, "... the tribes living in Southern Rhodesia have shared a common history of Nguni invasions, British conquest and missionary occupation".

The boundaries of Ndaou society are neither clear nor stable. Any societal boundaries are permeable, arbitrary and heuristic – and certainly those of the Ndaou, who have undergone a sequence of social and political change (Rennie, 1973: 44).

### **2.3.3 Ethnicity**

Although the creation and shaping of ethnic identities is ongoing for any particular group, ethnicity remains tied to a sense of group belonging. Shared characteristics may include a language or dialect, geographic region, common origin or ancestry (historical or mythical), religious bond, or political entity (MacGonagle, 2007: 18).

Ethnic identities among the Ndaou were created through social and political institutions, cultural practices and expressions, economic activities, and relations between humans and the environment. For example, social structures such as families, extended kinship ties, and patron arrangements shaped ethnic identification. Language, religious beliefs and rituals, oral traditions, and aspects of material culture served to foster ethnicity in both subtle and obvious ways. In many instances, diverse socioeconomic activities and unequal access to environmental resources intensified ethnic awareness. Gender relations, shifting class structures, and leadership patterns all influenced ethnic identification, while the unequal allocation of power and wealth heightened perceptions of group distinctiveness and exclusion (MacGonagle, 2007: 18).

MacGonagle (2007: 19) used oral interviews with Ndaou elders and European documentaries as the two main types of source material in her study. Oral interviews were likewise employed in fieldwork for this study together with focus group interviews.

MacGonagle mentions that during fieldwork near the border, it was clear that the international boundary separating Zimbabwe and Mozambique is an artificial border that runs through the Ndaou-speaking area dividing kin, culture, and speakers of the same language. Bonds of marriage, language, and culture tie Ndaou speakers to one

another across the border. MacGonagle attempts to cut across a colonial boundary and transcend the intellectual frontier, defining ethnicity in terms of the colonial and postcolonial age (MacGonagle, 2007: 21-22).

Just as MacGonagle (2007: 25) considers the concepts of ethnicity, identity and history in her book, *Crafting Identity in Zimbabwe and Mozambique*, the same concepts will be treated throughout the current thesis.

### **2.3.4 Research on the Ndau**

Apart from MacGonagle, as has been noted, not much research has been carried out concerning the Ndau of Chimanimani. The few available sources do not focus on the issue of marriage. One such is Vijfhuizen's work.

Vijfhuizen's (2002: xv) study was carried out within the framework of the Zimbabwe programme for Women's Studies, Extension, Sociology and Irrigation project hosted by the University of Zimbabwe. The Tawona irrigation scheme and Manesa village, in Mutema chieftaincy were selected in April 1994 as the research site. The location, Manesa village, lies in the Save river valley in Zimbabwe, Manicaland Province, Chipinge District and Mutema chieftaincy (Vijfhuizen, 2002: 10). This means that her study, although also conducted among the Ndau, was in Chipinge District, and not Chimanimani District, the latter being the focus of the current study.

Vijfhuizen's study explores, from a sociological, gender perspective, everyday rural life in a particular Ndau-Shona village in Zimbabwe (Southern Africa) with an irrigation scheme. She purports to show that women are not passive recipients and victims of patriarchal structures but strategic social actors in everyday life. She notes that gender is socio-culturally constructed and that both women and men use, transform and manipulate rules, beliefs, and value frames in practice (Vijfhuizen, 2002: 1-3). Her understanding of 'gender' concurs with Chitando, Adogame, and Bateye (2013: 3) who assert that, "... gender properly refers to socially defined relations between women and men in a given society..." Although her focus is on an irrigation scheme in Manesa village, her assertion is equally true for Ndau women in Chimanimani, Zimbabwe as far as marriage issues are concerned. Public perceptions show women as victims of patriarchal structures through and through but Vijfhuizen's study affords evidence to

the contrary. This thesis also portrays how women were and are still actively involved as social actors in Ndaou marriage practices. Vijfhuizen (2002: 3) uses the theoretical concepts of practice, power and discourse in order to get to grips with the complexities of everyday rural life. The concepts of practice, power and discourse are intertwined and emerge in all the chapters, because they are used to explore everyday life in a Ndaou village (Vijfhuizen, 2002: 5).

Vijfhuizen's (2002: 8) study is based on sociological-anthropological fieldwork among the Ndaou, whereas almost all existing studies were conducted among Shona groups. The Shona people occupy the largest part of Zimbabwe and also part of Mozambique. Vijfhuizen (2002: 8) mentions that Bourdillon, Lan and Gelfand focused mainly on the Korekore Shona; Aschwanden, Weinrich, Gelfand, Werbner and Holleman, mostly on the Karanga-Shona; Fry and Cheater largely concentrated on the Zezuru-Shona while only one study existed about the Ndaou, by Rennie (1973). However, this is a historical study, largely based on archival work with only one empirical case study. This indicates how little is known about the Ndaou people of Chimanimani.

Vijfhuizen's (2002: 14) study attempts to depict everyday life in a Ndaou village by exploring different fields. The following specific ones can be distinguished: social relations with specific reference to kinship and marriage; building of houses and running of homesteads and other networks; agricultural production and value of agricultural produce; allocating and holding of land; politics in the village and chieftaincy; spirit and witchcraft beliefs.

The only other important work mentioned above is that of Rennie but, as already indicated, his focus is on nationalism and/or history. Rennie (1973: i) researched among the Ndaou of the Mount Silinda and Chikore Mission areas under the United Church of Christ.

According to Rennie (1973: 9), the mission was one which pioneered its work simultaneously with the establishment of white settlement. This enormously complicated the work of the missionaries, for on the one hand they were identified, and identified themselves with, the whites for many purposes, and yet at the same time many of their purposes were directly at variance with those of the latter. The South Africa General Mission (SAGM) missionaries also faced the same challenge(s). The constant struggle with which the missionaries were faced, of collaborating with

white settler colonialists and yet not being one with them, will be revisited in Chapter 4.

## **2.4 MARRIAGE**

### **2.4.1 Rites of passage**

'Rites of passage', as established in Chapter 1, refers to the different stages that a human being passes through from birth to death. This includes birth, puberty, marriage and death. The term has a long history.

Van Gennep notes that an individual's life is characterised by a series of passages from one age to another, one occupation to another, and that moving from one group to the next is accomplished with special acts in the form of ceremonies (Van Gennep, 1908: 202). Van Gennep (1908: 202) asserts that, "Transitions from group to group and from one social situation to the next are looked on as implicit in the very fact of existence, so that a man's life comes to be made up of a succession of stages with similar ends and beginnings: birth, social puberty, marriage, fatherhood, advancement to a higher class, occupational specialization, and death. For every one of these events there are ceremonies whose essential purpose is to enable the individual to pass from one defined position to another which is equally well defined."

Van Gennep (1908: 203) subdivides these rites into three sub-categories: rites of separation (preliminal rites), transition rites (liminal rites), and rites of incorporation (postliminal rites). He mentions that the three sub-categories are not developed to the same extent by all peoples or in all ceremonial patterns. For example, rites of separation are prominent in funeral ceremonies whereas rites of incorporation are found during marriages. The three are neither always equally important nor equally elaborated. He (1909: 213,217,220) mentions 'rites of separation', 'rites of incorporation', and 'rites of reintegration into society', as well as the 'transitional period' in his discussion of funeral rites. Van Gennep (1909: 214) mentions, apart from funeral rites, rites of the anniversary of a wedding, of birth, and of initiation.

Just like the bride's family who prepare for what the bride will take with her to her groom's home, as shall be discussed in Chapters 5 to 7, Van Gennep (1909: 216)

mentions that the deceased's survivors "are careful to equip him with all the necessary material objects – such as clothing, food, arms, and tools – as well as those of a magico-religious nature – amulets, passwords, signs, etc. – which will assure him of a safe journey and a favourable reception, as they would a living traveller." Van Gennep (1908: 202) notes that there is "a wide degree of general similarity among ceremonies of birth, childhood, social puberty, betrothal, marriage, pregnancy, fatherhood, initiation into religious societies, and funerals."

Marriage is a rite of passage that every Ndau is expected to go through. In practice, though, some do not marry. They, for one reason or another, do not manage to perform that rite. Inside them, it is believed that they long to be married just like anyone else. Van Gennep (1909: 218) mentions something of the same concerning funeral rites. He remarks that "Like children who have not been baptized, named, or initiated, persons for whom funeral rites are not performed are condemned to a pitiable existence, since they are never able to enter the world of the dead or to become incorporated in the society established there... They would like to be reincorporated into the world of the living, and since they cannot be, they behave like hostile strangers toward it."

Van Gennep (1909: 219) asserts that what he said about funeral rites held true in general, but he adds that this was not the same among all peoples. He reiterated that he did not claim an absolute universality or an absolute necessity for the pattern of rites of passage.

The British anthropologist, Victor Turner (1969), later incorporated what he called 'rituals of affliction' (crisis rituals) into the rites of passage (Cox, 1998: x; Turner, 1964: 3-25). According to Olupona (2014: 56), rites of passage are rituals marking personal transitions. They coincide with birth and naming, circumcision or coming-of-age initiations, marriage, old age, and death. Each ceremony marks passage from one social status to another. Puberty rites transition a person from childhood to adulthood. It is as a 'rite of passage' that marriage will be treated in this thesis.

According to Taber (1981: 426), the related concepts of social status within a community and liminality form the basis for understanding life cycle rituals. Communities comprise social systems with clearly defined properties, rights and obligations for their members. Individuals in societies pass through transitional phases

which reinforce their roles in the community and which are marked by the rites of passage (Cox, 1998: x).

During the moments of transition, individuals possess no clearly defined role in the community. They are in the state of liminality (from the Latin *limen* meaning threshold), at the point of passage – neither in the previous state nor yet in the new one. People in the state of liminality often are considered dangerous and are in danger themselves. Hence, the rites of passage are designed to ensure that the person in transition neither acts in a harmful way nor becomes a victim of dangerous forces during the passage (Cox, 1998: x-xi).

According to Taber (1981: 426), at each stage, life cycle observances “typically include rites of separation, to ensure proper departure out of the prior status; rites of transition, to ensure safety during the hazardous liminal period; and rites of incorporation, to ensure proper identification with and recognition in the new status”.

Cox (1998: xi) asserts that the various stages may not always be distinguished sharply in the minds of those undergoing the rituals.

All societies have different age-linked rituals, and mark the passage from one to another, but not all conduct the same rituals, either in number or in kind (Cox, 1998: xi). Following van Gennep (1908 [1960]), Turner (1985: 205-17) lists the following as typical:

- a) Prenatal (e.g. rituals to confirm pregnancy, for foetal growth and for safe delivery);
- b) Naming rituals;
- c) Pre-pubertal and pubertal initiation rituals for the entrance into adulthood;
- d) Betrothal and marriage;
- e) Initiation into prestige bestowing adult associations;
- f) Rituals elevating individuals to high office or to priestly functions;
- g) Funeral.

Turner (1985: 209) suggests that the entire ritual process from separation through transition to incorporation is liminal because each phase occurs in a time between times and in a space that is ‘set apart’ from other places. This means that the liminal contradicts normal social experience. For example, in many initiation rites, where the



participants are taken to a place away from the village centre, a so-called 'bush school', and exposed to a world which is 'dark, dangerous, unpredictable, personified often by witches, demons, ghosts, ... and portrayed by masks and other guises worn by elders' (Turner, 1985: 210).

Although Victor Turner specifically studied the Ndembu of Zambia, subsequent generations of scholars have shown that Turner's findings have resonances in many traditional African societies and indeed in modern life (Olupona, 2014: 3).

Incorporation is consummated when the candidates are presented to society in their new status, often complete with a new name, new clothes, hairdo, and/or adornment, sometimes new place of residence, and of course new rights and duties (Taber, 1981: 428). This represents the conclusion of the ritual where the initiate has assumed his or her newly defined role in society. The entire ritual process thus binds the community together, creating what Turner calls *communitas* (Schmidt, 1988: 408).

According to Stewart and Strathern (2014: 30), the models of process supplied by Arnold Van Gennep were taken up productively by Victor Turner. Van Gennep's work centred on initiation rites and produced a general three-stage model of these which fed into a picture of how society is constituted and its roles structurally reproduced over time (Stewart & Strathern, 2014: 30). Van Gennep made a sharp distinction between religion and magic and between the sacred and the profane. In a fashion similar to Durkheim's study of Australian Aboriginal religion, van Gennep noted that in some societies all passages of individuals from one status to another entailed ideas of the sacred. His basic model of such passages was (1) separation, (2) transition (or 'margin') and (3) incorporation. The individual was first separated from their former status and then entered into a sacred state of marginality, finally being incorporated again into the profane domain. He generalised as follows: 'The life of an individual in any society is a series of passages from one age to another and from one occupation to another'. Rituals are the ways in which such passages are actually brought into effect (Gennep, [1908] 1960: 2-3).

Victor Turner's work built on the structural-functional model of society but took into account historical change, processes of conflict, the significant work of individual ritual specialists, and the element of drama in ritual. In addition, he identified different levels of meanings in ritual activities. For Turner, structure was always turning into process,

with the possibility of change. He is well known also for his elaboration of the idea of the 'liminal' and *communitas*, both developed out of Van Gennep's original model of stages in initiation rites (Turner, 1969).

#### **2.4.2 Ndaou marriage ceremonies**

The family, clan, and community are very significant aspects of the Ndaou society. Olupona (2014: 65) mentions that marriage rituals link two people to one another and to each other's family and community. Although his research was in West Africa, what Olupona says confirms the Ndaou understanding of marriage. For them, marriage is not exclusively for the two people getting married but for their families and their respective communities as well. Ward (1897: 1) defines marriage as an agreement, manifested in manner and form required by law, between a man and a woman (both of whom are legally competent to enter into such an agreement) to cohabit with each other, and each other alone, during their joint lives. Ward's Victorian definition of marriage differs from the Ndaou perception of marriage. In the latter's view, marriage cannot be discussed without mentioning the community and the families of the two people involved.

According to MacGonagle (2007: 61) much of the marriage ceremony among the Ndaou revolved around the negotiation and payment of bridewealth. This will be discussed more fully in Chapter 5.

Vijfhuizen (2002: 21-23) lists different types of marriages among the Ndaou. She notes that Ndaou men and women distinguish the following eight: *kutizira*; *matorwa* or *mabvunziro*; *kuzvarira* or *kuputswa*; *chigara mapfiwa*; *kugarwa nhaka*; *kutemaugariri*; *musengabere*; and *ngozi*. The fact that the Ndaou celebrated all these marriage forms shows that they possessed a rich and highly complex culture. These will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 3. Chapter 5 will present my findings on these and other Ndaou marriage forms as expressed by participants in my individual and focus group interviews with them in Chimanimani, Zimbabwe.

*Kutizira* is a type of marriage in which the girl runs away to a man's home. In most of the cases she will be pregnant but not in all. Although *kutizira* and *kutizisa* can be

distinguished, in practice *kutizisa* and *kutizira* are used interchangeably. In practice *kutizira* is *kutizisa* (Vijfhuizen, 2002: 21-22).

The most strongly recommended Ndaun form of marriage in the past was *matorwa* or *mabvunziro*. The girl would be collected from her parent's place (*kutorwa*) after the first instalment of *roora* (*mabvunziro*) would have been paid (Vijfhuizen, 2002: 22).

A poor family could give its very young daughter away to another family in marriage in order to be able to maintain itself. This was called *kuzvarira* or *kuputswa*. The receiving family would pay bridewealth to the poor family, which would enable the latter to survive. *Kuputswa* means being broken (Vijfhuizen, 2002: 22).

Another Ndaun marriage was *chigara mapfiwa* (literally meaning to inherit the fireplace). It was alternatively called *chimutsa mapfiwa* (literally to keep the fire burning). It meant what the term suggests: that cooking for the husband would continue. The death of a wife did not spell the end of married life for the widower. When a man lost his wife, the deceased's sister or her brother's daughter could replace her as a wife (Vijfhuizen, 2002: 22).

In addition, *kugarwa nhaka* (levirate) meant that a widow would be inherited by the deceased's brother. This was usually a year after the death of the husband (Vijfhuizen, 2002: 22).

*Kutemaugariri* was a poor man's option. He would work for prospective in-laws at their homestead for a period of time, providing his labour in lieu of *roora*. He could settle elsewhere after he had completed his service (Vijfhuizen, 2002: 22).

*Musengabere* literally means 'to carry a hyena and run away with it'. The man in this Ndaun form of marriage would carry a girl or woman to his place and she consequently became his wife. It was a forced marriage (Vijfhuizen, 2002: 22).

An *Ngozi* marriage was meant to make peace with the spirit of a dead person killed by a family member. *Ngozi* was believed to be the avenging spirit of a person who had been killed. The family whose member murdered a person was obliged to give a daughter to the family whose member was killed. This was the way to appease the avenging spirit so that it would not cause illnesses and misfortunes to the murderer's family (Vijfhuizen, 2002: 22).

It is necessary to note that the various ways of getting married among the Ndaus were meant to make sure that every man could marry and have a family of his own. Chapters 3 and 5 will develop this issue further.

According to Vijfhuizen (2002: 22), the incidence of the different types of marriages is changing; *kutizira* was the most common type of marriage at the time she wrote. Vijfhuizen (2002: 23) mentions that the Ndaus say that in the past it was unacceptable to become pregnant before marriage or to go to the husband's homestead before a first bridewealth payment was made (*mabvunziro*). Elders promoted the *matorwa* marriage. They also tried to check whether youngsters were still virgins or not. Beliefs, such as that parents' backs would break if the couple slept together before marriage, shaped behaviour. This, however, does not mean that girls would not fall pregnant before they were married. On the contrary, they would and consequently they would elope to the homes of the men responsible.

Several reasons can be given for the dying out of some Ndau marriage forms. One would be government interference. Certain forms of marriage (*kuputswa*, *ngozi* and *musengabere*) are prohibited by law. Another reason would be HIV/Aids which has influenced a decline in *kugarwa nhaka* marriages (Vijfhuizen, 2002: 23). Chapter 5 of the current study will record the reasons that participants in the fieldwork interviews gave. Westernisation could have been another reason. Kileff's (1970: 47) submission that, "... education, income and wider experience separate the suburbanites from other Africans in the townships and especially those in rural areas" helps to show that Westernisation brought some significant changes to the lives of indigenous peoples.

Vijfhuizen (2002: 23) notes that *kutizira*, *matorwa*, *kuputswa*, *chigara mapfiwa*, *kugarwa nhaka* and *ngozi* forms of marriage still exist. These are customary marriages, but when a marriage certificate is obtained the marriages become civil ones.

## **2.5 MISSIONARIES IN ZIMBABWE**

Missionaries played a very influential role in the history of the people of Zimbabwe and that of the Ndaus in particular.

According to Rennie (1973: 3), the mission was significant in different ways in contributing to the development of nationalism. The establishment of missions in Southern Rhodesia was closely associated with the establishment of colonial rule. Missionaries taught Africans beliefs and values which supported colonial rule and obedience to rulers, sometimes explicitly and often implicitly. Yet missions provided virtually the only opportunities by which Africans could gain the knowledge and skills necessary for social mobility in colonial society.

Mugambi (1989: 8) mentions that, "To most missionaries from Europe and North America, evangelisation meant disorienting their objects of mission from 'pagan, heathen, savage, primitive and barbaric' traditions. The practical objective was to turn the prospective converts into replicas of the missionary ... on a scale of conversion the foreign missionary gave himself 100% while the prospective convert was supposed to start at zero. On such a scale the missionary could measure his progress in terms of the degree to which his converts imitated him." This is the very root of the problem that this thesis addresses. It cannot have been a correct representation of facts that the Westerner was at 100% and the prospective convert at 0%. Such an understanding by missionaries caused them to want to 'create their converts in their own image'. The Ndau convert therefore has to rid himself or herself of this diminished self-understanding of himself or herself and of his or her environment.

In line with the above, Bourdillon (1977: 7) asserts that, "Certainly, before the 1890s missionaries had scant respect for traditional African culture, though ... this has as much to do with the European societies from which they came as with missionary participation in trade. But eventually their contact with Africa forced missionaries to look at themselves, and in the twentieth century we find an ever widening understanding of, and sympathy for, African ways." This 'sympathy', however, did not change their attitudes on African marriage practices as shall be shown in this study.

It was not just the missions that mattered. According to Rennie (1973: 4), the town, and the farm likewise, are key external agents of the changes which took place in African society in the colonial period and which underlay the development of African nationalism. The focus of this study will be placed on Western influence, especially from the two mission schools in Chimanimani (Rusitu and Biriiri) and from the farms, for towns were far away from the area under investigation.

Missionaries influenced the local social and political system in many ways, consciously and unconsciously. They altered concepts of economic development, sex and marriage, institutions of land holding, forms of music and dress (Rennie, 1973: 7).

### **2.5.1 Early Missionaries to Zimbabwe**

Some of the first missionaries to Zimbabwe were Gonzalo da Silveira (a Portuguese Jesuit missionary) and Robert Moffat, the former in the 16<sup>th</sup> century and the later in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Gonzalo da Silveira became the first Christian missionary and martyr of Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe). He was murdered in 1561. On 2 January, 1560, he sailed from Goa with two other missionaries to Africa. Robert Moffat (1795-1883) was sent to Africa in 1816. He was a Scottish pioneer missionary to South Africa who made inroads into Zimbabwe to evangelise, long before the colonialists came and well before the name Rhodesia came into use. In 1857, Mzilikazi gave him permission to establish a mission at Inyati – the first ever in Matabeleland and in Rhodesia, but it was not until two years later that Moffat, then over 60 years of age, was able to organise the mission (Jenkins & Stebbing, 1966: 2-12; Barlow, 1976; Murphree, 1969: 6; Platvoet, 1996: 59). These earlier attempts to conduct missionary work in Zimbabwe are unrelated to the missionary work of the nineteenth into the twentieth centuries. The latter are separated from the former in both space and time and the locality where the missions originated. Murphree (1969: 6) asserts that, “The modern history of Christianity among the Shona dates from the occupation of their country by the British South Africa Company in 1890.” Chapter 4 will furnish details about the hurdles that the SAGM missionaries had to encounter, including those of labouring for years on end without any converts.

### **2.5.2 Zimbabwean Missionaries and the Place of South Africa**

South Africa played a central role as far as the evangelisation of Zimbabwe and Southern Africa was concerned. According to Zvobgo (1996: i), the expansion of Christianity to Zimbabwe in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, stemmed from South Africa. This indicates that South Africa is a very important base when missionary work in

Zimbabwe is considered. The missionaries that evangelised the Chimanimani area in question also travelled north from South Africa.

### **2.5.3 Christian Missions in Zimbabwe in the 1890s**

Among others, missionary efforts at Mt Selinda and Chikore in the Chipinge district are important to the current study for they were also among the Ndaue people. On 19<sup>th</sup> October, 1893 pioneer missionaries of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, consisting of eight Americans, two children, four Zulu evangelists and their families, arrived at Mt. Selinda and established their first mission station (Zvobgo, 1996: 6). In 1895 missionaries of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions established their second mission station at Chikore, 18 miles West of Mt. Selinda (Zvobgo, 1996: 12).

Due to the Ndebele and Shona Risings of 1896-1897, the missionaries believed that traditional religion and customs had militated against Ndebele and Shona acceptance of Christianity (Zvobgo, 1996: 57). In terms of this negative perception of traditional religion, the missionaries later tried, with great success, to suppress traditional religion and customs. This is in accord with Bhebe's (1973: 41) sentiments that, "The reasons for the failure of the Christian missions to make more significant impact were many. The most important of these were: traditional religious beliefs and institutions..."

According to Zvobgo (1996: 66), Christian missionaries opened several mission stations in Zimbabwe between 1891 and the beginnings of the Ndebele and Shona risings of 1896-7. All these were affected considerably by the uprisings. In the wake of the suppression of two risings, Christian missionaries opened new mission stations (Zvobgo, 1996: 66).

There was close collaboration between the white settler government and the missionaries in Zimbabwe. Cecil John Rhodes donated areas of land to different missionary groups in different places in Zimbabwe. Upon their arrival in Zimbabwe, representatives of various missionary societies began to establish mission stations in Mashonaland and Manicaland. The generosity of Cecil John Rhodes and the British South Africa Company in offering Christian missionaries financial support as well as large areas of land on which to establish mission stations, made the evangelisation of

the people of Mashonaland and Manicaland possible under the security of the new regime (Zvobgo, 1996: 366). Murphree (1969: 7) asserts that, “The close association between Church and Company was not discouraged by the Company. Rhodes approved of it, and even encouraged it.” The story of the SAGM shows, though, that the Rusitu and Biriiri missions did not benefit from this generosity. On the contrary, the SAGM missionaries had to navigate the mountainous terrain of Chimanimani on their own, negotiating with chiefs for places where they could settle. Chapter 4 will develop this further.

#### **2.5.4 The South Africa General Mission (SAGM)**

The SAGM entered the Rhodesian mission field when three men – Raney, John Coupland and Dudley Kidd – arrived from South Africa to pioneer missionary work in Rhodesia in March, 1897. They selected a site at Rusitu near the Mozambique border (Zvobgo, 1996: 78).

According to Zvobgo (1996: 79) when Mr Coupland died in November 1897, Mr Raney soldiered on until the arrival of Mr Douglas Wood at the mission in 1900. In 1901 Mr Raney was invalided home to Cape Town. In 1902, however, he returned to Rusitu. In 1904 Mr J.E. Hatch arrived at the mission while in 1908 a boarding school was founded. In 1910 Mr and Mrs G.E. Barnes arrived at Rusitu; in 1914 Mr and Mrs Howells arrived from England to join the staff (Zvobgo, 1996: 79).

Further details regarding SAGM, as indicated above, will be discussed in Chapter 4.

According to Zvobgo (1996: 91) the African response to Christianity in Zimbabwe during this period (1897-1923), was best summed up by the editor of the *Zambesi Mission Record*: ‘When he first settles among these natives’, he wrote in 1910, ‘the missionary is regarded with suspicion and dislike. He has come – so they think – to rob them of their deeply-cherished customs; to upset their social economy; to turn the hearts of the children against their fathers, and of fathers against their children; and worst of all, to fetter them with the creed of the hated whites’.

Initially, missionaries found the Shona very difficult to evangelise. Firstly, there was a general suspicion among the Shona of the motives of the missionaries in coming to



evangelise them (Zvobgo, 1996: 100). Not only were the Shona generally wary; several Shona chiefs in particular strongly opposed Christianity (Zvobgo, 1996: 101). But the greatest hindrances to Christianity in Mashonaland as in Matabeleland, from the missionaries' point of view, were polygyny and the *roora/lobola* system. The *Zambesi Mission Record*, for example, stated in October, 1906: 'The older people, confirmed polygamists... give the missionary practically no hope. He must turn his attention to the young...' (Zvobgo, 1996: 104). SAGM missionaries, like other missions, tried the best they could to influence the young in their mission schools as a way of changing the cultures and lifestyles of their targeted populations, the Ndaus in the case of SAGM.

The missionaries also denounced the *roora* system. Fr Richartz, for example, among other missionaries, did so because for him it meant simply buying a girl, likening it to the slave trade where the girl's wishes and inclinations often not considered. Richartz notes that the girl would be forced and that the father could even torture his own daughter to 'make' her agree (Zvobgo, 1996: 105). Although this understanding is correct to a certain extent especially as far as the girl's wishes and inclinations were concerned, *roora* was and is in no way merely selling a girl. It is a cherished practice among the Ndaus and other Africans; some of the reasons for this will be given in Chapters 3 and 5. According to Rennie (1973: 50), bridewealth was not a payment for a bought article, but compensation to a family for the loss of the child-bearing capacity of one of its members.

Bhebe (1979: 111-112) submits that, "The missionaries bundled together polygamy, *lobola*, and the *kuzwarira* practice (which was equated with infant marriage) and condemned them as inhuman institutions and practices which a civilised country like Britain had no justification in tolerating among its subjects." Just as they failed to understand *roora*, the missionaries did not comprehend polygyny and its role among the Ndaus. Polygyny (the more appropriate term for polygamy) refers to a union of a man with two or more wives. This thesis will use both polygyny and polygamy interchangeably from this point, to signify one and the same thing. According to Gelfand (1973: 176-78), polygamy is a way of life among the Shona; the practice 'exemplifies the survival imperative that calls for many children and a big family group'. He suggests that perhaps a very potent reason for polygamy is that a man who has many children 'is well off and enjoys the feeling of safety in numbers.' Gelfand thus

seeks to understand the social function of polygyny, something the missionaries should also have done.

According to Hatendi (1973: 138-9), polygamy is a social solution to social problems. As far as Bishop Hatendi is concerned, a Shona polygamist is a humanist: 'He comes to the rescue of widows and orphans at their hour of need in a cultural environment which does not provide adequately for independent widows and orphans'. He adds that those who condemn polygamists 'do not fully appreciate the service they render to society' (Zvobgo, 1996: 105). What is evident here is that although the missionaries denounced polygyny, it was a way of solving social ills among the Shona and the Ndaou. They therefore denounced it from a position of failing to understand and acknowledge its social function among the Shona and Ndaou.

Missionaries condemned polygyny on the grounds that it was the cause of jealousy and hatred in the family (Zvobgo, 1996: 106). The missionaries failed utterly to appreciate fully the values of the cultures of the African people of Zimbabwe whom they came to evangelise (Zvobgo, 1996: 112). Chapters 4 and 5 will further demonstrate the fact that the missionaries failed to appreciate the customary ways of those they wished to evangelise. Had they given themselves time to study and understand the Ndaou ways of life, some of what they criticised they might well have appreciated instead.

### **2.5.5 Christian Villages and/or Mission Stations**

Christian villages and/or mission stations were used to shut converts out of the 'evil world' outside the Christian village or station. In order to shield their converts from 'pagan' influences, some missionary societies established Christian villages (between 1898 and 1921) on their mission stations (Zvobgo, 1996: 127). SAGM did not do so at either Rusitu or Biriiri but they made sure that the stations were a beacon of light to the surrounding heathen communities. They also used the schools at the mission stations to effect change, at least starting with the little boys and girls.

Mugambi (2003: 53) notes that "While mission schools instructed their African pupils and students to accept, obey, and copy their colonial masters, these learners at the same time acquired knowledge and skills which were to become essential tools in the

nationalist struggles for self-determination.” In other words, mission stations were not just ‘spiritual fields’. The education that numerous young people received at mission schools influenced other areas of their lives as well.

Ranger (1983: 249), without mentioning where this occurred, mentions that “Missionaries who had begun by taking converts right out of their societies so as to transform their consciousness in ‘Christian villages’ ended by proclaiming the virtues of ‘traditional’ small-scale community. He adds that “people were to be returned to their tribal identities; ethnicity was to be ‘restored’ as the basis of association and organization.” This shows that some missionaries softened their stance on certain issues as time progressed but, regrettably, the issue of having to hold church weddings after customary marriages remains entrenched in Chimanimani to date.

Platvoet (1996: 60) and Murphree (1969: 9, 10) both agree with the fact that missionaries segregated their converts from ‘pagan society’, at times in separate villages or plantations (‘Salems’). Not only were the converts culturally and religiously segregated, they were “kept them under strict patriarchal, ‘aggressive, if often benevolent’ supervision” (Platvoet, 1996: 60).

### **2.5.6 Rigid Church Laws and Discipline**

All the Christian churches in Zimbabwe laid down rules and regulations governing church membership. The SAGM required candidates for church membership to spend at least one year in a baptismal class; after this, they were required to present themselves individually before a committee composed of African members of the Church; any missionaries present were there only in an advisory capacity. Candidates were questioned regarding their conversion and were asked to state the fundamental teachings of the Christian faith, that is to say, the way of salvation, the power of the Blood, the Work of the Holy Spirit and to quote Scripture verses supporting these beliefs. They were then questioned closely regarding their attitude to ‘heathen customs’; the committee also enquired into the candidates’ manner of life since becoming Christians. Several churches made use of similar processes or procedures. All the churches also laid down grounds for discipline in order to deal with those members who broke church rules and regulations (Zvobgo, 1996: 319,320,322).

In the SAGM, adultery and polygyny were the chief grounds of severance from the Church; in addition, a man who showed that he had backslidden and regularly attended beer drinking events or prayed to the spirits, or consulted 'witchdoctors', was excommunicated (Zvobgo, 1996: 322). Sadly, this rigidity also extended to marriage practices. The Ndaou Christians were required to hold church weddings after being married culturally for their marriages to be recognised by the church. This practice has lived on until the present. The current study attempts to explore the necessity of this duplication.

## **2.6 LAWS**

### **2.6.1 South African Marriage Laws**

South Africa has been very progressive in dealing with and integrating customary laws with South African law. There is evidence that soon after independence in 1994 there was a drive seeking to reconcile the two. The South African Law Commission was critical in this drive. Spies (2016: 249) mentions that "the place of customary law in South Africa's new constitutional dispensation has been the subject of much debate". The critical question had to do with whether customary law was to be expressly recognised as part of South African Law or not. Another complicated issue dealt with whether the right to participate in one's culture could be reconciled with the equality principle. The outcome of the heated debates, according to Spies (2016: 249), "was that customary law was recognised as part of South African law subject to the Bill of Rights".

South African family law has benefitted immensely from the Constitution of South Africa that incorporates this Bill of Rights. According to Clark (2004: 135), "The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, Act 108 of 1996 with its entrenched Bill of Rights has had and will continue to have a profound impact upon the development of South African family law... it ... demands that legislation should be implemented in a way that promotes the spirit, purport and objects of the Bill of Rights. The inclusion of children's rights at the constitutional level has already provided many opportunities for constitutional litigation. Another important factor affecting South African family law is the ratification by the South African Government of a number of international

conventions. In June 1995, South Africa ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (hereafter the CRC). This was followed by the ratification of the Hague Convention on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women as well as the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child.” Such a stance that aims to make sure that laws operating in the country respect various human rights and enshrine equality before the law is admirable.

Discriminatory practices in family law have been rooted out. Clark (2004: 135-136) asserts that “The South African Courts, especially the Constitutional Court, have played a definitive role in utilising the right to equality enshrined in the Constitution to reinterpret some of the principles of family law so as to address past discriminatory practices. The listed grounds of discrimination include, inter alia, marital status, sexual orientation, sex and gender, culture and religion. All of these grounds have begun to have a significant influence on the development of South African family law.” As indicated earlier, all the aforementioned are progressive steps towards ensuring that everyone is equal before the law.

As a result of the above efforts, it is important to note that South Africa accorded customary marriages equal status with civil marriages. Clark (2004: 136) submits that “Diversity and divergence characterise South African law ... The recognition of Customary Marriages Act 120 of 1998 gave customary marriages equal status to civil marriages... There are separate rules regulating the lives of those living under customary law...”.

This thesis contends that, in the manner in which the South African authorities have reviewed marriage laws, the Zimbabwean authorities also ought to do likewise.

### **2.6.2 Zimbabwe Marriage Laws**

The Introduction to the *White Paper on Marriage and Inheritance in Zimbabwe* (1993: 1) indicates that its purpose was to put forward suggestions for reforming the law relating to marriage and inheritance, in particular the law governing inheritance of the property of married persons. Its focus, therefore, was on reforming the laws that

govern the latter. To achieve this, it sought to stimulate public debate on those issues of law which affect the lives of most people in Zimbabwe.

Although its aim was to do the above, the *White Paper on Marriage and Inheritance in Zimbabwe* (1993: 1) provides some insight into the Zimbabwean marriage laws. It states that, broadly speaking, there are three types of marriage recognised by Zimbabwean law. It describes these as marriage under the Marriage Act [Chapter 37]; the form of marriage recognised under customary law, which is called a “customary marriage”, and foreign marriages.

The marriage under the Marriage Act [Chapter 37] is termed a “civil marriage”. This Act may be cited as the Marriage Act [Chapter 5:11] (name changed from the former to the latter) [*Zimbabwe Marriage Act. Chapter 5:11* (1996)]. It is based on the Christian form of marriage and is therefore monogamous. Civil marriages must be celebrated before a marriage officer (a magistrate or a specially appointed minister of religion) and their formalities and consequences are governed by the Roman-Dutch common law and statute law (*White Paper on Marriage and Inheritance in Zimbabwe* (1993: 1). All Zimbabweans are competent to contract monogamous marriage under the Marriage Act. A marriage under the Marriage Act is a general law marriage whose formation, formalities and consequences are governed by the general law: that is, the Roman-Dutch common law and statute law (Ncube, 1989: 133).

The form of marriage recognised under customary law is called a “customary marriage”. These are contracted in accordance with the formalities required by customary law and must be solemnised by an African marriage officer (a presiding officer of a community court) if they are to be fully recognised in law. Solemnisation may take place at the same time as the marriage is contracted or at any time afterwards. A customary marriage is potentially polygynous: that is, the husband may, but need not, have more than one wife. Solemnisation under the Act is a fairly simple process which involves the spouses appearing before a marriage officer, reporting the marriage to him and causing him to record it in his or her marriage register. There is no time limit within which customary marriages must be solemnised: if the spouses wish it, they can solemnise their marriage after years of living together as man and wife [*White Paper on Marriage and Inheritance in Zimbabwe* (1993: 1, 2)].

Foreign marriages represent the third type of marriage recognised in Zimbabwe. Generally speaking, Zimbabwean law recognizes marriages contracted outside Zimbabwe, so long as the form of marriage is valid according to the law of the country in which the marriage takes place [*White Paper on Marriage and Inheritance in Zimbabwe* (1993: 2)].

Ncube (1989: 133) puts it somewhat differently. According to him, there are two types of valid marriages that can be contracted in Zimbabwe, namely a monogamous marriage under the Marriage Act [*Chapter 37*] (hereinafter called the Marriage Act) and a customary law, potentially polygamous, marriage under the African Marriages Act [*Chapter 238*] (hereinafter called the African Marriages Act).

For Ncube (1989: 133), the third type of “marriage” is not a valid marriage except for certain purposes provided for in the African Marriages Act. This type of “marriage” is an unregistered customary law marriage, commonly referred to as a customary law union. The third type of “marriage” is normally given as this unregistered customary law marriage, not “foreign marriages” which are not usually mentioned or talked about. The three most common marriages in Zimbabwe, therefore, are the two valid marriages and one invalid marriage (according to law), the customary law union.

Only Africans are competent to marry each other under the African Marriages Act. Two non-Africans or an African and a non-African cannot marry each other under the African Marriages Act (Ncube, 1989: 133). A marriage contracted under the African Marriages Act is a customary law marriage whose consequences are, unless there are compelling reasons to the contrary, governed by customary law; accordingly such a marriage is potentially polygynous (Ncube, 1989: 133-134).

A customary law union is an invalid marriage except for certain purposes pertaining to the status and rights of children. Such a union is a customary law marriage which meets all the requirements of a marriage under customary law, except registration in terms of the African Marriages Act. Thus if Africans follow all the requirements required by customary law but fail to register their “marriage” in terms of section 3 of the African Marriages Act, their “marriage” or association would be legally categorised as a customary law union and would be invalid because section 3(1) of the Act states that:

*“... no marriage contracted according to African law and custom ... shall be regarded as a valid marriage unless – (a) such marriage is solemnized in terms of this Act”.*

A customary law union is treated as a valid customary law marriage for the purposes of the status, guardianship, custody and rights of succession of children, so that the children of such a union enjoy the same rights as those enjoyed by children born in valid customary law marriages. A customary law union is also regarded as a valid marriage for the purposes of maintenance of the “wife”. Thus the wife in a customary law union is entitled to be maintained by her husband as if their “marriage” was fully valid. For all other purposes except those stated above, a customary law union is legally invalid (Ncube, 1989: 134-135).

The only difference, therefore, between a customary marriage under the African Marriages Act and the customary law union is that the latter is a “marriage” in which the parties have complied with all the requirements of a marriage recognised by customary law except for failure to comply with the statutory requirement of registering the marriage in terms of section 3 of the African Marriages Act (Ncube, 1989: 135). The issue of registration and non registration of marriages will be revisited in the data findings chapters (5-7) in this thesis. It will be established that registration of marriages is a most important issue that should be considered for all marriages.

A marriage may be solemnised only by a marriage officer. For the purposes of the Marriage Act, every magistrate by virtue of his or her office is a marriage officer, while ministers of religion can be designated marriage officers by the Minister (Minister of Justice, Legal and Parliamentary Affairs) upon application by the religious organisation to which the minister of religion belongs (Ncube, 1989: 141). A customary law marriage under the African Marriages Act can only be solemnised by a community court presiding officer. The officer of the district in which the woman or her guardian resides is the designated marriage officer for the purposes of the Act. In addition to the marrying couple the presence of two witnesses who are majors is required (Ncube, 1989: 144).

## **2.7 PROBLEMATIC AREAS**

### **2.7.1 Polygamy/Polygyny**



According to Dwane (1975: 222-223), the fundamental question which Christians have to ask, is whether the Christian Church has been right in equating monogamy with the Gospel, and thereby ruling out of court the possibility of receiving polygamists into its ranks. At the World Conference of the International Missionary Council in 1938, African delegates raised this question of whether monogamy is essential to Christianity, or whether it is a Western type of marriage (Dwane, 1975: 222-223). This is a critical query but the current study will not devote much time to answering it since it does not directly fall within the aims and objectives of this research.

Hatendi (1973: 138) argues that, "Polygyny is not as natural a status for Shona men as European students of Shona culture would like to believe. It is, however, a social solution to social problems."

### **2.7.2 Church weddings**

Klaus Fiedler (1998) advocates for the abolishment of church weddings altogether. He contributed a chapter in the book, *Rites of Passage in Contemporary Africa* (1998), (edited by James L Cox), with a title that pre-empts his position: "For The Sake of Christian Marriage: Abolish Church Weddings".

Writing from the perspective of a Christian pastor, Fiedler argues from his research conducted in Zaire (North Eastern Zaire) and Kenya that a new process of inculturation is needed to preserve Christian marriage. For various social and cultural reasons, the practice of holding a church wedding, as is done in the West, works against the basic concept beneath a Christian marriage. He establishes this on the concept that what a people do in a society bears more theological weight than what they say. In his own case studies, Fiedler deduced that the traditional ways of becoming married still prevail with or without church weddings (Cox, 1998: xv). The duplication of marriages was therefore a major challenge for Fiedler as indicated above. Fiedler will be used in the data findings chapters in this thesis as a way of data verification and literature control.

### 2.7.3 Bridewealth

According to Fiedler (1998: 48-49), many early missionaries had opposed the acceptance of bride-wealth as implying the 'selling of women', but all of them had soon come to learn that this was the African way of constituting a legal marriage. Therefore, just as much as in many European wedding ceremonies, the fulfilment of civil requirements was required (e.g. the ceremonial question in England: 'Who giveth this woman to be married to this man?'), so in Africa the fulfilment of the civil requirements (bride-price) was expected.

Fiedler (1998: 49) notes that without payment of the bridewealth no Christian marriage could take place. However, since bridewealth would have been paid normally only after the birth of the fourth child or so, the first children of a marriage would be born out of wedlock. Their parents would live in concubinage and would, as such, be excluded from the sacraments of the church (and thus from divine grace, too, since the sacraments are to convey divine grace).

This applies to various churches in differing degrees. It describes correctly the situation in the Roman Catholic Church in South Tanzania, but it applies equally to the situation in the Africa Inland Church in Kenya, which makes a church wedding the prerequisite for receiving communion. This explains to some extent why in that church on the (somewhat rare) day of communion, up to 70% of the church members and faithful church attenders leave the church as they are not qualified for participating in the sacrament of Christian fellowship (Fiedler, 1998: 49-50). Chapters 5 to 8 will grapple with the necessity of such requirements.

Because of the large amount required for bridewealth in many areas (e.g. Northeast Zaire and Kenya), 'marriage by eloping' has become the rule. The churches do not accept this as a form of civil marriage but look at it as concubinage, to be punished by exclusion from the means of grace. Yet 'marriage by eloping' these days in North East Zaire is a thoroughly acceptable (and accepted) form of civil marriage (Fiedler, 1998: 50). Marriage by eloping is likewise very rife among the Ndau and it is only expedient that the church reconsiders its rigidity on marriage matters among the Ndau. Excluding many people from church offices and from receiving communion simply because they did not have church marriages (weddings) is very problematic.

This new (and nevertheless thoroughly African) way of getting married could in one aspect at least appeal to the churches: in it the consent of the marriage partners plays a prominent role, and this free and voluntary consent, according to the church teaching, is one of the most basic ingredients for a proper marriage. But the churches usually perceive 'marriage by eloping' as sin, to be remedied by a proper wedding (though usually only low key since it is regarded as a 'second hand wedding'), preceded by due repentance on the side of the young couple (Fiedler, 1998: 51). Fiedler's treatment of church weddings in Northeast Zaire and in Kenya will help a great deal in one's understanding of church weddings among the Ndaus of Chimanimani, Zimbabwe.

Kileff (1970: 107-108) admits that, "Payment of *rovoro* [*roora*] is the first step in a series of events which may end with a wedding in church. A traditional marriage is completed when part or all of the *rovoro* has been paid... Thus, a couple are married in the eyes of the Christian community only after they have exchanged Christian marriage vows, but they are married in the eyes of the traditional community when the *rovoro* has been negotiated and paid. By getting married in church an African forfeits his right to become polygamous at some future date." Chapters 5 to 8 will discuss this further.

#### **2.7.4 Social stratification**

Fiedler (1998: 52) asserts that, in North East Zaire and in Kenya, very few can afford a church wedding, but for those who can do so, it is a major status symbol. The chapters discussing data findings in this thesis will also report what the Ndaus participants had to say about the expenses associated with church weddings.

Church weddings have become even more a problem for Christian marriage because of another process of change in African society: the growing social stratification. While most people are quite poor, this does not apply to all. Even in Kenya, where there is much more wealth than in North East Zaire, most people cannot afford a church wedding, but others can (Fiedler, 1998: 52).

For Fiedler (1998: 52) the wedding ceremony is the case of a naïve transfer of Western customs to Africa under the guise of a Christian ceremony. The problem is that the church did not take the wedding ceremony as the blessing of an existing marriage, but

as the real thing. Therefore, a marriage without a church ceremony cannot be a real marriage, or at least not a Christian one (Fiedler, 1998: 52). This is at the very basis of what the current study seeks to interrogate.

This in turn means that because of either the high bridewealth charges or the expensive wedding feast or because of both, a Christian marriage is out of reach for most Christians, however faithful Christians they might be otherwise (unless they are rich in material possessions). As noted, the ability or inability to afford a church wedding can be seen as the result of the process of social stratification in Africa. Some can afford it (or have to); most cannot. But a perhaps more important process of stratification takes place within the church which requires a church wedding as a precondition for either full membership or for the acquisition of special graces (Fiedler, 1998: 53). The social stratification that is caused by a requirement to have church weddings will be addressed later in the current thesis.

The Africa Inland Church and the Roman Catholic Church and others make a church wedding a precondition for receiving the sacraments (communion and for Catholics even the sacrament of confession). In the Africa Inland Church in Western Kenya an experienced Sunday school leader was to become a church elder. But he could not, because he had never celebrated a church wedding. A similar case is found in the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian in Malawi. A Presbyterian wanted to become a church deacon but he was required to hold a church wedding first (Fiedler, 1998: 53-54). This shows that the challenges that the Ndaui people are encountering affect other African Christians elsewhere in Africa.

The attitude that a church wedding is needed for certain offices in the church provides for religious stratification (Fiedler, 1998: 54). Fiedler (1998: 55) poses a very important question: "Does this mean that all those who have had no church wedding do not lead a Christian married life?" His answer is that, Protestant theology *talked* would not agree to this conclusion, nor would honest observation support it (Fiedler, 1998: 55). He differentiates between 'theology talked' and 'theology acted' to prove that there are inconsistencies between the two.

The church in Africa needs to take Fiedler's concerns highlighted above seriously. Fiedler, however, regrets the fact that the churches have either been unable or unwilling to remedy this confused situation (Fiedler, 1998: 56). For the sake of

Christian marriage, and for the sake of millions of Christian Africans who want to live a Christian married life, something must be done, and be done quickly too (Fiedler, 1998: 57).

Fiedler categorically states that although the New Testament teaches much about Christian marriage, it does not make any slightest allusion to a church wedding. Consequently, he concludes that no church wedding is needed to make a marriage a Christian marriage (Fiedler, 1998:57). The United Baptist Church in Chimanimani should examine this submission and come up with its own understanding of how the marriage issue should be handled among the Ndaus. Chapter 8 will reiterate this.

Fiedler (1998: 57) mentions that churches should accept any genuine African marriage as a valid marriage and adds that this would be a real inculturation. In other words, it should not be that African churches simply accept missionaries' teaching and resolutions to issues without questioning and reflecting on them.

It is essential to note, as Fiedler (1998: 57) claims, that "the church wedding is neither a constituent part of the Christian faith nor was it an integral part of African culture. Therefore, the church should abolish the church wedding." Fiedler (1998: 57) adds that "in keeping the church wedding as the standard, the church pleases the few and burdens the many."

As established in the foregoing discussion, church weddings promote social stratification within the church itself. Those that afford or those that can have church weddings are deemed to be better Christians than those who cannot. Such should not be the case. The church should be as inclusive as is possible and it should see to it that equality in the church is pursued at all costs. Continuing to uphold a divisive regulation such as the church wedding does more harm than good to the wellbeing of the church.

### **2.7.5 Abolishment of church weddings**

The call to abolish the church wedding is not unreasonable at all. Fiedler sees no other solution than simply to abolish church weddings since they are not needed to make a marriage a Christian one. He looks forward to the day when it will be no longer possible

for a man to talk about his wife of more than 20 years, calling her his fiancée, because they have not yet 'been married (in church)'. He looks forward to the day when no pastor will be required any longer to 'marry' a couple, with their five more or less grown up children present, asking their parents if they are willing to marry each other (Fiedler, 1998:57-58).

Although the call to abolish church weddings is enticing, as mentioned in Chapter 1 this thesis will seek a 'hybrid' solution to the duplication of marriages among the Ndau Christians in Chimanimani. It will neither advocate for the abolishment of traditional marriage nor for that of church weddings. Using postcolonialism, the solution will be found in the 'space' where the two (Ndau and Western marriage practices) intersect – where they encounter each other in a hybrid setting.

## **2.8 CONCLUSION**

This chapter has been an attempt to bring the contributions of scholars to the fore and to establish research gaps that this study aims to fill. Several subtopics were used to facilitate the discussion, and each has been discussed in some detail. It was established that the Ndau religion needs to be understood for what it is. A little of the history of the Ndau and that of SAGM was treated in the current chapter but more information about these will be provided in Chapters 3 and 4 respectively. In conclusion, it ought to be reiterated that marriage will be treated in this study as an important rite of passage among the Ndau. On the whole, the study is an attempt to trace the history of the present marriage practices among the Ndau and to suggest possible ways of bringing the cultural marriages and the church weddings closer together. Chapter 3 will be devoted to the Ndau people.

## CHAPTER 3

### THE NDAU PEOPLE OF CHIMANIMANI, ZIMBABWE

#### 3.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter 2 attempted, using several subtopics, to bring the contributions of scholars to the fore and to establish research gaps that this thesis aims to fill. The current chapter deals with the Ndaou people of Chimanimani, Zimbabwe. Chapters 3 and 4 seek to give an orientation and/or some background to facilitate an understanding of the research findings chapters (Chapters 5 to 7). As emphasised in Chapters 1 and 2, Chapter 3 employs postcolonialism as the paradigm that undergirds the study. The chapter consists of three major sections. The first section is on the Geography and History of the Ndaou People. The second is on Ndaou Identities/Ndauness. The third major section focuses on Marriages. All the sections employ the use of different subheadings. At the onset, the chapter will consider the etymology of the name 'Zimbabwe', a brief history of the people of Zimbabwe in general, origins and meaning of the term 'Gazaland', and brief histories about Chimanimani and Chipinge. The following issues will be treated under Ndaou Identities: Identity, Shona and Ndaou, Ndauness, Reciprocity, Mbire and Rozvi, *Mfecane*, Shangaans, Ndaou Common Suffering, Totems and Clans, and Chieftaincies. This section details how the Shona and Ndaou came to be termed the Shona/Ndaou. The same section presents aspects that have been associated with being Ndaou: ear piercing, *nyora* (scarification), and *pika* (dots on several parts of women's bodies). It shall be seen that Reciprocity has to do with the cultural borrowing between the Ndaou and the people that they came into contact with, including but not exclusively the Shangaan. The third and final major section on Marriages focuses on Shona Marriages in General, Ndaou Marriages in Particular, *Roora*, and Polygamy/Polygyny.

#### 3.2 GEOGRAPHY AND HISTORY OF THE NDAU PEOPLE

##### 3.2.1 ZIMBABWE

Zimbabwe is a Southern African country among several others. The connectedness of Southern African countries, especially before colonialism, will be explored later in

this chapter. **Fig. 1** below shows some of the Southern African countries and the location of Chimanimani and Chipinge districts. *A Concise Encyclopedia of Zimbabwe* (1988: 1) mentions that, “The word ‘zimbabwe’ derives from the Shona *zimba ramabwe* (big house of stone). It appears in early documents as the name of royal residences. Great Zimbabwe is the most outstanding of such structures.”

It is important to note that much of the Ndaou history that this chapter will explore occurred before the advent of colonialism. As noted, and will be established, colonial boundaries cut across people of the same backgrounds and cultures resulting in scenarios where the same people are to be found on two different sides of the international border. Such is the case with the Ndaou people as this chapter shall show. The impression was given that there were concrete language and or dialect boundaries but this is not necessarily the case. According to MacGonagle (2007: 11, 13), “Missionaries and colonial officials drew language borders and demarcated dialect territories in many parts of Africa.”

**Fig. 1 The map of Zimbabwe**



**Source:** <https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/e/e6/Zi-map.png> (Access date: 29 November 2017; Permission: free to use). Chimanimani and Chipinge Districts are to the southeast of Mutare and to the right of the Save River as **Fig. 2** below shows.



**Fig. 2 The map of Zimbabwe showing Chimanimani and Chipinge Districts**



**Source:** <https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/4/40/Zimbabwe.geohive.gif>  
(Access date: 29 November 2017; Permission: free to use).

### **3.2.2 PEOPLE OF ZIMBABWE**

The people of Zimbabwe have a long history. The people that occupy Zimbabwe today are not the same people that were there around about 1000 CE. Numerous migrations, both immigrations and emigrations, have taken place in between. This fact further bolsters the assertion that the people of Southern Africa were intricately interconnected before colonialism.

Before the Bantu-speaking people invaded Zimbabwe, there existed the San tribe in Zimbabwe. The Bantu people are understood to have settled in Zimbabwe, coming from Tanzania around the eleventh century. These migrations continued for the next about five hundred years into the fifteenth century (*Encyclopaedia Rhodesia*, 1973: 363; Rayner, 1962: 20). There is implied here a close connection between Tanzania and Zimbabwe. The origins of the majority of people that populate Zimbabwe today can be traced back to Tanzania, therefore underlining the connectedness of the two countries in history.

It is important to define 'Bantu'. According to Rayner (1962: 26), "The Bantu might be defined as all those 'blacks' who use some form of the root *ntu* for human being; with the plural affix this becomes *ba-ntu* (Bantu) i.e. the men (of the tribe), whence the term under which the whole great group has passed into anthropological literature."

In the history of the people of Zimbabwe there were states ruled by different chieftaincies or dynasties. It is essential to consider chieftaincies in this thesis because chiefs were and remain custodians of culture, marriage cultural practices included. The most common ones are the Munhumutapa (Mwenemutapa/Monomotapa) and the Rozvi/Changamire states. These would dominate for some time until another state would rise and take over. The pattern would continue. The Rozvi state was disturbed by the inward migrations of the Nguni and Swazi at the end of the eighteenth century (*Encyclopaedia Rhodesia*, 1973: 363-364).

The nineteenth century was characterised by more invasions by people from South Africa. There were two powerful invasions from the south, one by the Shangaan and another by the Ndebele. The former occupied the Eastern Highlands in Chimanimani, Zimbabwe, while the latter was in Matabeleland. The people called 'Ndebele' today left Natal in 1822 and settled in Matabeleland at last (*Encyclopaedia Rhodesia*, 1973: 364; Isichei, 2004: 8). The first of these two invasions is much more important to this study because it affected the Chimanimani District that this thesis focuses on. More will be said about 'the Shangaan' later in this chapter.

Today two main ethnic groups exist in Zimbabwe: the Shona and the Ndebele. That these two are the main ethnic groups does not make them the only ethnic groups in Zimbabwe. The Tonga, Kalanga, Sotho, Venda and Hlengwe are other minority people groups in Zimbabwe. Unlike the rest, the Tonga are a matrilineal group of people

(*Concise Encyclopedia of Zimbabwe*, 1988: 40; Weinrich, 1977: 48). The Ndau, as will be demonstrated, fall under 'the Shona' together with other Shona dialectical groups.

As indicated, the two main ethnic groups, the Shona and the Ndebele, can be said to be two main groups of Bantu speakers. While this chapter will concentrate on the Ndau who are part of the Shona group, it should be noted that the Ndebele are also a significant population in Zimbabwe. The Ndebele are descendants of Mzilikazi and his followers who, like the Shangaan, also fled from Shaka (*A Concise Encyclopedia of Zimbabwe*, 1988: 41). More information will be provided about the *mfecane* later on in the chapter.

### **3.2.3 GAZALAND**

The term 'Gazaland' is used in the wider sense to mean all Ndau territory both in Zimbabwe and in Mozambique. The former was later called British Gazaland while the latter was termed Portuguese Gazaland. In Zimbabwe, what was called British Gazaland in colonial times is now divided into two districts, Chimanimani and Chipinge. These continue to be heavily populated by the Ndau people.

The term 'Gazaland' has colonial overtones. According to *A Concise Encyclopedia of Zimbabwe* (1988: 169), 'Gazaland' is a "colonial name for the area dominated by the Gaza Kingdom during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The area lay east of the Save River in South Mozambique and south of the present day Chimanimani. Gazaland was partitioned between Britain and Portugal by the 1891 Anglo-Portuguese Convention. Gazaland is also a term currently applied to the Chimanimani and Chipinge districts."

The Gaza kingdom was born out of the *mfecane*. It is probably from the 'Gaza kingdom' that the term 'Gazaland' was coined. This kingdom was created in the 1820s by Soshangane in Mozambique and established its headquarters in Mount Selinda, Zimbabwe, in 1830 where it remained until 1889, when under Ngungunyana, the Gaza people returned to Mozambique. In 1895 the Gaza kingdom was ended by Portuguese conquest and Ngungunyana was exiled (*A Concise Encyclopedia of Zimbabwe*, 1988: 169; Posselt, 1978: 22, 24). There can be no mention of Gazaland without that of the name 'Soshangane', a most important figure during this era.

Gazaland can also be described in terms of the Ndau chiefs that ruled the different parts of it. The chiefs are believed to have been brothers as will be emphasised under chieftaincies later. According to Hlatywayo (Undated: 1), "... Gazaland ... was divided among ... four chiefs. The chiefs were Mtema, Gwenzi, Musikavanhu and later Mapungwana. Some other chiefs who were known were Zamchiya and Mahenye. The most important events on Gazaland history came from the three ..., namely Mtema, Gwenzi and Musikavanhu." It is these chiefs and their people that suffered under the tyranny of the Gaza Nguni.

In line with the above, Beckett (1994: 54) asserts that "The region of Gazaland was occupied by an African tribe known as the Ndau, composed of members from both the 'Rozvi' and the 'Shangaan' clans, forming a 'sub-group' of the Shona peoples. Complex in nature, the Ndau society existed within an intricate religio-cultural web, possessing a detailed 'world-view', coupling man [sic] with the spiritual and physical world in which he existed." More detail on the complex nature of the Ndau people will also be given later especially when this chapter turns to consider the 'mixed-pot' that the Ndau society comprised.

### **3.2.4 CHIMANIMANI**

As already established, this study focuses on the Ndau of Chimanimani, Zimbabwe. According to Farquhar (1943: 31) "The word Chimanimani is derived from the Chindau word *Chimana*, a narrow place, a passage or pass, or a 'poort' ... The Africans themselves, according to one informant have extended the name for this very narrow, steep-sided poort, 'Chimanimani' to the whole range ...". The term Chimanimani is used both as a name of a small town in Ndau territory, and as a name of a government district in the same territory. As a district, many villages fall under it. A *Concise Encyclopedia of Zimbabwe* (1988: 116) states, 'Chimanimani' is a "small town and district south of Mutare and north of Chipinge, formerly Mandidzudzure, originally Melsetter – then named after the Orkney home of the Moodies – settlers who had reached the area in 1892."

In line with the above, it can be deduced that Melsetter was the former name given to Chimanimani by the settlers.

### 3.2.5 CHIPINGE

Just like Chimanimani, Chipinge is both a name of a town and of a government district. According to *A Concise Encyclopedia of Zimbabwe* (1988: 118), 'Chipinge (formerly Chipinga)' is a "town in the south-east, lying 64 km south of Chimanimani, and 62 km from Birchenough Bridge. The town is named after a local chief." *Encyclopaedia Rhodesia* (1973: 80) concurs. Not much will be said about Chipinge because, although it is also a Ndaou district, the focus of this study is on the Chimanimani district.

Earlier on it was mentioned that the Ndaou chiefs are believed to have been brothers. They are also understood to have been initially part of the Rozvi state in a place known by most of the Ndaou I interviewed as Mbire. I noted in my interviews with the Ndaou of Chimanimani that they knew the term Mbire but were not sure of its exact location in Zimbabwe. According to Latham (1965), "All the tribes occupying Melsetter district trace their origins to the area known as Mbire (Wedza/Charter districts). They appear to be an off-shoot of the VaRozvi who migrated eastwards, and have a common history with Mutema and Garahwa in Chipinga and possibly Mutasa and Saunyama in Umtali and Inyanga." Mutema and Garahwa are Ndaou chiefs and Mutema is believed to have been the eldest of the Ndaou chiefs. It ought to be reiterated, as was mentioned earlier, that the study finds the chiefs to be important among the Ndaou because they are and remain custodians of Ndaou cultural practices. They assist in ensuring that all the Ndaou under their jurisdiction uphold cultural norms, values and practices.

The people who occupy Chimanimani district, although all called Ndaou, are believed to have been a result of different people-groups coming together. When they migrated from Mbire, the people now called Ndaou found some people already staying in what are presently Ndaou territories. In interviews with the Ndaou I was told that the people who were found in these territories were given the names *Manyakuzvivhuta* or *Matsono*, the former meaning people who 'fanned' themselves with reference to the fact that they did not have any chiefs. According to Meredith (1903: 339), "The natives of Melsetter are now of a mixed race; they were not very numerous when they first came in and to increase their numbers they intermarried freely with other races which came in subsequently."

The Ndaou language is believed to be a mixture of languages as well. According to Meredith (1903: 339), "The language is a mixture of the Va-Rozi [sic!] and Mashona,

and in the south of the District a great many Natives speak the Shangaan tongue, which latter is of practically recent importation.” In other words, the Ndaou people today are a result of the interrelationships between the Rozvi, the Shona, and the Shangaan.

Although colonial authorities set well-defined people boundaries, it is not easy to place concrete boundaries among the various people groups all having Ndaou connections. As Rennie (1973: 44) acknowledges, “It is not easy, either, to demarcate the people of the Melssetter highlands by a peculiar cluster of cultural traits which distinguishes them from their neighbours. To the west the Duma and Hera, to the north the Garwe and Manyika and to the north-east the Teve, and to the south the Hlengwe, all have close affinities with the Ndaou.” In other words, Ndaou neighbours exhibit elements of Ndauness in certain respects as well.

This chapter emphasises that boundaries or identities are fluid and construed, and so are Ndaou identities. According to Rennie (1973: 44), “The boundaries of Ndaou society are, therefore, neither clear nor stable. Any societal boundaries are permeable, arbitrary and heuristic and certainly those of the Ndaou who have undergone a sequence of social and political change.” What the Ndaou have gone through, in history, has to a very great extent defined who they are and who they see themselves as today.

### **3.3 NDAU IDENTITIES/NDAUNESS**

#### **3.3.1 IDENTITY**

Issues of identity are complex. In fact, this study maintains that it is better to speak of identities rather than identity. MacGonagle (2007: 2) defines identity as “a broad sense of group belonging, or being something”, a definition that this study would also want to adopt.

It should be noted that although people may talk of an African identity, the different people of Africa have separate identities as well. As Appiah (1992: 26) remarks, “Whatever Africans share, we do not have a common traditional culture, common languages, a common religious or conceptual vocabulary.” Instead of speaking of an African identity, Appiah (1992: 173) writes of ‘African identities.’

People define or give themselves an identity or identities. According to Appiah (1992: 174), “Every human identity is construed ...”. Appiah (1992: 178) mentions that, “... the Igbo identity is real because Nigerians believe in it, the Shona identity because Zimbabweans have given it meaning.” The same can be said of Ndaou identity. All these can be argued to be ‘identities’ and not ‘identity’, i.e. Igbo identities, Shona identities, and Ndaou identities.

Identities are not carved in stone. As MacGonagle (2007: 2) observes, “Identities are fluid; they cross borders and they have a long and messy history in this region of southeast Africa.” The Ndaou identities that transcend the international border could be a very good example of this.

Identities are crafted over time, something MacGonagle (2007) emphasises frequently in *Crafting Identity in Zimbabwe and Mozambique*. According to her (MacGonagle, 2007: 2), “Identities have a story and a meaning behind them; thus they have a contribution to make to history.” Appiah (1992: 178) asserts that, “... identities are complex and multiple and grow out of a history of changing responses to economic, political, and cultural forces, almost always on opposition to other identities.” Accordingly, the ‘environments’ that people find themselves in have an immense effect on their self-understanding and identity. By ‘environment’ I refer to everything that surrounds a person or people, whether social, economic, political, cultural, among other aspects.

Normally people talk of identities as if they remain constant over time. Rather, the opposite is the most plausible way of looking at identities. Identities have been said to be fluid and so they are constantly changing and being reinterpreted. How the Ndaou understood themselves in the nineteenth century, for example, is not exactly how the Ndaou in the twenty-first century understand themselves. The ‘environment’ has changed and so have perceptions of Ndaou identity. As MacGonagle (2007: 3) emphasises, “... identities are not static – they change in intriguing ways and often shift in a slow, imperceptible manner.” Ndaou identities have, therefore, evolved and continue to evolve today.

A single person can be torn between several identities. Appiah (1992: 180) notes that “Because the value of identities is thus relative, we must argue for and against them case by case ... each of us belong to multifarious communities with their local

customs.” It is interesting to see how Kwame Anthony Appiah himself presents his multiple identities in different occasions in *In My Father's House* (1992). His life is testament to the fact that one does not carry a single identity. Appiah (1992: 177) asserts that, “... the African identity is, for its bearers, only one among many”. The same can be said of any other identity, the Ndaou identity included.

Appiah (1992: 158) notes that identities could be in conflict. His story in *In My Father's House* exemplifies this. In other words, the different identities that one finds himself or herself aligned to are not always in agreement. The Ndaou identity for example might be in conflict with the Christian identity and that is a living reality of a Ndaou Christian. He/she, indeed, is Ndaou but he/she also is Christian. This is where the challenge of being married twice also emerges. The Ndaou Christian marries according to his or her traditional customs but the Church expects him/her to have a church wedding; hence a conflict of identities is realised.

### **3.3.2 SHONA AND NDAU**

As intimated, both ‘Shona’ and ‘Ndaou’ were not originally used by the people that are called by these names to refer to themselves. These people are believed to have been termed as such by other people before they came to use these names. Back in history, the Ndaou would identify themselves with a region or a political entity but would call themselves neither Ndaou nor Shona. The Nguni-speaking Ndebele and other outsiders were the ones who gave the people who came to be called ‘Shona’ that name. The Shona only came to call themselves Shona after 1890. Today, however, the Ndaou would either say they are Ndaou or Shona (MacGonagle, 2007: 10-11, 14).

As established, the usage of the terms ‘Shona’ and ‘Ndaou’ started at a later stage in the nineteenth century. MacGonagle (2007: 3), as already noted, asserts that, “... the Portuguese, who left an extensive record about this region, did not use either Shona or Ndaou, in their early precolonial vocabularies. Both words came into use only in the nineteenth century, before formal colonialism took hold under Portuguese in Mozambique and under the British in Southern Rhodesia, now Zimbabwe. Yet, a common identity was evident in the unified linguistic and cultural history of those in the east who spoke what came to be called the Ndaou language...” So, in other words, a



common identity among the people preceded the names Shona or Ndaou. There were already some peculiar elements about the people that were later to be given those names, elements that distinguished them from other people or people-groups. I will treat some of the aspects that defined Ndauness in this chapter.

The aforementioned is in harmony with Bourdillon's (1973: 11) assertion that, "... we cannot presume that all Shona peoples share a common religious system – indeed it is known that there are significant differences... Nevertheless, certain patterns do arise which give to all Shona something of a common culture..."

Shona is an umbrella term. Under it are several subdivisions. According to *Encyclopaedia Rhodesia* (1973: 329) Shona (MaShona) is the "name given to various tribes with similar customs and traditions who occupy the greater part of Rhodesia. The Shona speak the same language with dialectic differences, and all tribes have an East African culture, similar to the Karanga tribes of Lake Tanganyika." The six main Shona dialect groups in Zimbabwe are: Ndaou, Manyika, Korekore, Zezuru, Karanga, and Kalanga (MacGonagle, 2007: 14; *Encyclopaedia Rhodesia*, 1973: 329; *A Concise Encyclopedia of Zimbabwe*, 1988: 40-41; Hatendi, 1973: 135).

In line with the above, MacGonagle (2007: 8-10) observes that, "Shona is neither an apt ethnic or "tribal" label, but its usage as a blanket term usually implies that being Shona means speaking the same language, having similar cultural traditions, and experiencing a shared history. Shona is an accepted linguistic term that identifies speakers of the Shona language, which falls within the south-central zone of the Bantu language group. Ndaou is one of six main dialects of Shona ... Shona speakers have shared cultural practices and historical experiences ...".

As has already been established earlier on, some of the above transcend international boundaries. According to MacGonagle (2007: 14), "Three of these classifications – Ndaou, Manyika, and Korekore – stretched into Mozambique, which by that time was the colony of Portuguese East Africa. Within each area there were also various dialects. For example, among the Ndaou cluster, there are subdivisions ... Ndaou, Danda, and Shanga." So, the Ndaou especially in Mozambique, also have several subdivisions. In Zimbabwe, there are variations in the tone and depth of Ndaou in different areas but there are no clearly defined subdivisions. In a sense, the Ndaou themselves are not the same in all aspects in the different places where they are to be

found. In Zimbabwe alone, the Ndau spoken in Chimanimani district is much lighter compared to that spoken in Chipinge district which is much deeper. The Ndau spoken in Mozambique is even deeper still.

The Ndau are a significant Shona group. MacGonagle (2007: 3) was referred to earlier in this regard. The focus of this study is, however, only on the Ndau that occupy the Chimanimani district where the SAGM missionaries did their work.

The Ndau understand themselves in the light of the subjugation that they had to endure under various groups. According to Rennie (1973: 35), the Ndau place their past under three divisions: “society before the Gaza Nguni invasions from the south, society under the Gaza state, and society under white colonial rule.” It is essential to note that this suffering that the Ndau experienced is a significant element in the creating and sustaining of Ndauness, as MacGonagle (2007; 2008) repeatedly emphasises.

As indicated, the word ‘Ndau’ is believed to have come from the word ‘Ndauwe’ that the people now called Ndau used to say in greeting (MacGonagle, 2007: 16; *Encyclopaedia Rhodesia*, 1973: 262). As a result of interviews with Ndau elders, MacGonagle (2007: 16) mentions that “One elder related her thoughts on being called Ndau when she explained, ‘For me, we are called Ndau because we say ‘*Ndauwe*’, that is why we are called VaNdau.’ In a similar vein, several elders explained that the term is derived from *nda-u-nda-u*, or *nda-u* (with a low tone), a saying people used ‘long ago’ when entering a homestead. Another elder from Nyanyadzi, Zimbabwe, said, ‘I think the Ndaus are called Ndau because when they get to a home they say ‘*Nda-u*’ ...Thus, Ndau became a nickname used by others to describe the people who said *Nda-u*.”

In line with the above is Vijfhuizen’s (2002: 17) remark, reproduced above.

MacGonagle (2007: 16) observes that, “Although many Ndau speakers no longer utilise Ndau or Ndau-we in their greetings, elders recognize the meaning behind the word today and describe this usage as common in the late nineteenth century.” It is necessary to note, as she (2007: 16) puts it that, “In fact, the use of the word Ndau may even extend back to the eighteenth century...”. According to MacGonagle (2007:

16), as stated above, “Whenever the term originated, Ndaou was not widely used to designate a specific people until the nineteenth century.”

An example of shifting identities can be seen in the case of the Danda. According to MacGonagle (2007: 17), “The two groups of Ndaou and Danda were not always that different, and over time the Danda came to be Ndaou as well.”

Although Ndaou started off most likely as a nickname, there is a sense of pride associated with the term today. MacGonagle (2007: 17) notes that, “Among Ndaou speakers, being Shona is replaced for the most part by a sense of being Ndaou, or being something else such as Danda or Tomboji, but nevertheless speaking the Ndaou language”. MacGonagle (2007: 96) observes that there is a sense of pride in being Ndaou although the name started off as a derogatory nickname used by the Gaza Nguni. “Throughout the Ndaou region, elders at the end of the twentieth century express a resilient and proud sense of being Ndaou, while some also acknowledge the ‘mixed pot’ of blended cultural influences that make up current notions of Ndauness” (MacGonagle, 2007: 97; MacGonagle, 2008: 39).

The Gaza Nguni changed the Ndaou landscape significantly. According to MacGonagle (2007: 96), “The influence of the Gaza Nguni on the Ndaou was significant in several ways, and perhaps most symbolically in the naming of this widespread group as Ndaou.”

### **3.3.3 NDAUNESS**

Several aspects of Ndaou culture are said to be peculiar issues that define ‘Ndauness.’ These can be called identity markers. Some of these aspects have to do with beauty and will be further expounded. These aspects have changed and continue to change over time. According to MacGonagle (2007: 54), “Certainly, aspects of Ndauness changed in the ongoing, shifting process of identity formation ...”.

As already established, ‘Ndauness’ was not realised overnight. In fact, it evolved over hundreds of years, and is still evolving. It was built on the basis of common traits. Social structures and cultural practices related to totems, marriages, births, and deaths

served to bind the Ndau together (MacGonagle, 2007: 1, 69). Issues of totems and of marriage will be treated later in this chapter.

Ndauness can be defined in a wide range of different aspects of Ndau culture including “modes of social and political organization such as households, lineages, totems, clans, villages, and chieftaincies” (MacGonagle, 2007: 53). MacGonagle (2007: 53) adds that, “The Ndau regulated life-cycle events such as birth, marriage, and death through practices that reinforced the social order.”

As has already been established, identities cross boundaries. MacGonagle (2007: 3) therefore notes that, “Ndauness ... crosses temporal, geographic, and theoretical boundaries.” The international border between Zimbabwe and Mozambique is artificial because it divides kin, culture, and speakers of the same language. The Ndau on either side share common interests and a common identity although they also make distinctions among themselves (MacGonagle, 2007: 21-22).

The first part of this chapter focuses on Ndau history. MacGonagle (2007: 3) argues that there is great value in studying the Ndau people’s history. According to her (MacGonagle, 2007: 3), “A sense of being Ndau continues to exist into the present, albeit in a modified form, despite different colonial histories, postcolonial trajectories, and official languages in Zimbabwe and Mozambique.” It helps to study Ndau history because it will show what has remained constant among the Ndau over time and what has changed.

Their common suffering is one aspect that has also kept the Ndau together over time. As MacGonagle (2007: 107) comments, “The history of Ndau speakers is rooted in a common group of people who have endured various hegemonies while maintaining their own local traditions.”

There is a sense in which the Ndau identity is intricately intertwined with the Shangaan identity. This brings to the fore the ‘mixed-pot’ of Ndau identities (MacGonagle, 2007: 107).

The Ndau always refer back to Ngungunyana in any attempt to relate their history. The Gaza Nguni settled in the Ndau heartland in the 1830s (from Mozambique where they had settled in the 1820s) and returned later for an extended occupation from 1862 to 1889. This conquest helped the Ndau craft their identity. Ngungunyana significantly

influenced both women and men in shaping Ndauness (MacGonagle, 2008: 29). Common suffering, as has been mentioned earlier, helped craft Ndau identity (MacGonagle, 2008: 30).

### **3.3.4 RECIPROCITY/ 'MIXED POT'**

The Gaza Nguni influence on the Ndau was not a one-way phenomenon. There is a sense in which either group influenced the other. MacGonagle (2007: 97) asserts, "There was an element of reciprocity between Nguni ways and Ndau culture." The Gaza Nguni assumed certain aspects of Ndau identity. This two-way acculturation existed well into the colonial period. It is significant to note that towards the close of the nineteenth century, the Gaza Nguni are said to have been using Ndau drums and pots, as well as Ndau methods of healing (MacGonagle, 2008: 39; MacGonagle, 2007: 96-97; Platvoet, 1996: 52).

Clan names were changed due to the Gaza Nguni presence and influence. MacGonagle (2007: 98) asserts that, "Soon after the Gaza Nguni conquest, Ndau clan names in the region were transformed into their Nguni equivalents (for instance Moyo became Sithole or Nkomo). When the 'Zulu' arrived, everything changed because the Zulus would marry the most beautiful Ndau women. Thus, the Gaza Nguni presence disrupted Ndau social structures, significantly altered the names of clans, and called existing identities into question."

- Ear piercing, *pika* and *nyora*

Ear piercing, *pika* and *nyora* have already been mentioned as having been aspects of beauty that contributed to a sense of Ndauness. Although Ndau women have pierced their ears and worn earrings to decorate their bodies for centuries, Ndau men began to pierce their ears in the nineteenth century after the invasion of the Gaza Nguni. This was a sign of subjugation under the latter, but after the end of Gaza Nguni overrule in 1889, a man's pierced ears were a sign of being Ndau (MacGonagle, 2007:74-75). The practice of ear piercing could be one means of demonstrating changing identities in different times. Ndau men were initially forced to pierce their ears by the Gaza

Nguni, but they later continued the practice by choice to mark ethnic boundaries and demonstrate to others that they were Ndau (MacGonagle, 2007: 102-103). It ought to be noted, however, that ear piercing was not an exclusively Ndau practice. Shoko (2007: 8) mentions that “the Karanga also adopted piercing of ears...”

Just as with ear piercing for men, *pika* or tattoos became a rite of passage for women. Young men had to have their ears pierced before they went to work in South Africa’s mines. *Pika* marked the passage of young women into adulthood. The beauty marks (*pika*) were applied during puberty and were to be found on the cheeks, forehead, and stomach to enhance their attractiveness to boys. *Pika* was a sign of both beauty and womanhood among the Ndau. One should note that although these were significant they were not forced on anyone (MacGonagle, 2007: 75).

Scarification can be viewed in one sense as a form of abuse but so can ear piercing. It is important to understand what these meant to the Ndau then in their context. Apart from adding beauty to women’s bodies, *nyora* or scarification pleased men. Scarification patterns as indicated were on the face, stomach, upper chest, and thighs. This was believed to enhance sexual relations. While this was pleasing to men it was believed to have been arousing to the woman as she was caressed (MacGonagle, 2007: 75-76). MacGonagle (2007: 76) notes that, “*Nyora*, like *pika*, was a rite of passage for young women. ‘Without *nyora* one was not considered a full woman’... a woman without *nyora* was both ridiculed and frowned on by others as one who did not keep up appearances.”

It should be noted that identity markers evolve over time. The Ndau in Chimanimani today do not necessarily identify with the identity markers mentioned above.

### **3.3.5 MBIRE AND ROZVI**

Mbire and/or Rozvi were mentioned earlier when I indicated that the Ndau chiefs are believed to have come from the Rozvi state or from Mbire. Shiriyedenga (Mutema), as has been mentioned, is understood to have been the greatest of the brothers that left the Rozvi state with their followers and are now settled in Chimanimani, Chipinge and parts of Mozambique (Meredith, 1903: 339). The Rozvi tribe itself had been formed in the sixteenth century (Thompson, 1942: 83).

According to Bourdillon (1976: 12) a group of the Rozvi migrated southwards in the middle of the seventeenth century. They migrated from the north-east, most likely fleeing Mutapa state civil wars. He maintains that, "One group moved south-east to found most of the present Ndaou dynasties." Posselt (1978: 35) mentions that, "The Mbire traditions indicate a district north of the Zambezi river as the tribal home [for the Vambire]; others allege that the name is derived from an ancestral chief of the name of 'Mbire'. The tribe migrated south and settled round Mt Wedza, which had formerly been occupied by a section of the Bahera under one Tsimba. The Vambire are related to the Vajindwe under Zimunya of the Umtali District and to the people of Nembire of the Darwin District."

The influence of the Rozvi has not waned completely. Bourdillon (1976: 12) postulates that, "The dominance of the Rozvi over surrounding chiefly dynasties remains reflected in the instalment ceremonies of many modern Shona chiefs who must have the ritual approval of a member of the Rozvi clan." I know this to be still obtaining today where the 'Rozvi' name is evoked when it comes to installation of Ndaou chiefs. This is in agreement with Posselt's (1978: 10) submission that, "Before the downfall of the Barozwi the Mambo appointed all tributary chiefs, irrespective of tribe, and the ceremony was known as '*kugadza ushe*'. The practice is still observed by some native tribes of obtaining the approval of the principal Barozwi Chief in connection with the appointment of every new chief."

Shoko (2007: 7) gives more background information on the Rozvi and attempts to define the term 'Rozvi' at the same time. He submits that, "The northern and southern parts of Mberengwa came under the influence of the Changamire dynasty called the 'Rozvi' which means destroyers or despoilers. Their totem is Moyo (heart). Centred at Great Zimbabwe, the Rozvi ruled the entire area between the Zambezi and the Limpopo until 1830 when the Nguni invaders from the south interrupted their rule. Rozvi became the standard totem adopted by chiefs who were given permission to settle in Mberengwa by the Rozvi rulers."

In addition, Posselt (1978: 9-10) mentions that, "The Barozwi are first mentioned towards the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, when they attacked and destroyed a number of Portuguese stations, at the same time dealing a death blow to the tottering Monomotapa Empire, to which they succeeded, being the dominant people for the

space of more than a century.” Posselt (1978: 11) adds that, “... all the native evidence shows that for one hundred and fifty years the Barozwi were the rulers until their overthrow by the Swazi about 1830.”

### **3.3.6 MFEKANE**

The *mfecane* changed the Ndaue landscape in immense ways. According to *A Concise Encyclopedia of Zimbabwe* (1988: 251), ‘*mfecane*’ is a Nguni term meaning ‘the crushing’. It refers to the raiding tribes of South African origin that swept through this region in the 1820s and 1830s. Mzilikazi’s Ndebele state was a product of the *Mfecane*, as were the Nguni and Gaza states. *A Concise Encyclopedia of Zimbabwe* (1988: 7) asserts that, “...This Nguni push (*mfecane*) disrupted the existing socio-political systems of much of Southern and Central Africa.”

Shaw (2006) calls *mfecane* by the name ‘*difaqane*’. Shaw (2006:185) points out, “... in early nineteenth century Africa, south Africa was shaken by a series of Bantu people movements known to history as the *difaqane* (scattering). Xhosa, Khoi, Tswana, Ndebele, and a number of other tribes scattered in terror across the landscape of Southern Africa. The figure that inspired their terror and drove them to flight was Shaka, king of the Zulu (1787-1828). Though Shaka’s rule lasted only a decade his impact was enduring. He ... precipitated the migrations that permanently redrew the map of South(ern) Africa.”

According to Rayner (1962: 28-29), “The *Mfecane* means the Breaking, the Crushing, and is the name given by the Bantu to the fierce wars which broke out amongst them in the early part of the nineteenth century... It is a process which thrust some of them from Natal as far north again as Nyasaland [Malawi] and Northern Rhodesia [Zambia].”

The impact of the *mfecane* was great. Rayner (1962: 30) argues that, “He [Mzilikazi] was not the only one who was on the move. Defeated opponents of Chaka from amongst the Nguni peoples, such as Soshangane and Zwangendaba, were also streaming back with their supporters towards the north. One group was to settle in Gazaland in Portuguese East Africa, where they still go by the name of Shangaans in memory of their leader; the other horde was to travel even farther, settling at last in Nyasaland, where they are known as the Angoni (Nguni).”



As Shaw (2006: 185) indicates, “King Mzilikazi migrated north and established a Ndebele kingdom in what would one day be Zimbabwe. In similar ways southern Mozambique and Swaziland were formed by migrations of the *difaqane*.” The interconnectedness of the people of Southern Africa in pre-colonial times can be attributed directly to *mfecane*. Some of the people who are now known as Zimbabweans, Mozambicans, Swazis, Malawians, Zambians and Tanzanians had their origins from the people who scattered in fear of Shaka or Tshaka as he is sometimes called. Colonial boundaries, in this sense, blur the lines of connectedness that exist between the people of Southern Africa. It is important to note how the Southern African countries were intricately interconnected. In a sense, although the colonial borders, still in place today, separate the Southern African people, history does not in any way treat them as people completely divorced from each other. On the contrary, history presents them as people that had undeniable connectedness prior to colonialism.

Soshangane led a Nguni group that invaded the south-eastern Shona of Manyika in 1820. He took over the Gaza province around the Zimbabwe-Mozambique border. Zwangendaba invaded the Changamire (Rozvi) State on his way to Zambia, Malawi and Tanzania. Mzilikazi completed the destruction of the Rozvi State in the 1840s, establishing his own kingdom in the southwest Zimbabwe (Rennie, 1973: 135; *A Concise Encyclopedia of Zimbabwe*, 1988: 7; Mhlanga, Undated: 1).

Soshangane (Nxumalo) established his headquarters at Mount Selinda. He settled first in Mozambique with his people and later moved into Zimbabwe. Years later, he returned to the lower Limpopo basin in Mozambique (Bilene). Soshangane’s military state incorporated both refugees and local populations under his control. His people were very cruel to other Bantu tribes and even the Portuguese were not excepted from his cruelty. Even Mzila, his son, and Ngungunyana, his grandson, were also harsh according to the memories of Ndaus elders. Many, though, speak more fully and often about Ngungunyana who is the most recent of them all (MacGonagle, 2008: 36; MacGonagle, 2007: 95; Bannerman, 1977: 487; Mhlanga, Undated: 1; *A Concise Encyclopedia of Zimbabwe*, 1988: 357).

Ndaus elders, in interviews, mention this Bilene locality, sometimes called Biyeni, as the place where the Ndaus people originated. In other words, the Ndaus understand their history in a way very closely fused with the history of the Gaza Nguni. Although, from

the foregoing discussion, we can deduce that the Ndaу people were in existence way before the Gaza Nguni came, the Ndaу identity today is intrinsically intertwined with that of the Gaza Nguni, sometimes called Shangaans after Soshangane, the first leader of the Gaza Nguni and the initiator of the Gaza state. Ndaу identity today cannot be separated from Gaza Nguni identity. This is partly because, as intimated, Ndaу women are said to have been married by the Gaza Nguni men while the Ndaу men were incorporated into the Gaza Nguni army, blurring the lines of distinction between the two. History records that when the Gaza Nguni state finally broke down, many Ndaу people left Mozambique and went back to British Gazaland from where they had been taken.

The march from Mount Selinda to Bilene or Biyeni under Ngungunyana in 1889 was characterised by many fatalities. The 400 kilometres march was too much for the thousands of men, women and children who died on the way due to lack of food and water and due to exhaustion. Many Ndaу people were forced to march south with him as a way of demonstrating their loyalty to him. When the Portuguese defeated the Gaza Nguni, many Ndaу people left Bilene for Zimbabwe but others stayed in Mozambique, contributing to overlapping and fluid identities. The migration is well remembered by Ndaу elders because the returnees told the tale. Although the Gaza Empire ended, it left a deep imprint and influence on the Ndaу (MacGonagle, 2007: 95; Rennie, 1973: 148; Bannerman, 1977: 487-488; Meredith, 1925: 56).

### **3.3.7 SHANGAANS**

The term 'Shangane' or 'Shangaan', according to *A Concise Encyclopedia of Zimbabwe* (1988: 346) refers to "followers of Soshangane, one of the rebel leaders who fled from Shaka during the Mfecane. Later, the term was applied to peoples formerly associated with the Gaza, where Soshangane and his people had settled, such as the Ndaу and Hlengwe, and it became more of a regional identification." Bannerman (1977: 484-485) contends, "Strictly speaking the name Shangaan should only be applied to the Nguni followers or descendants of Soshangane ... However, for many various reasons the Hlengwe and Tsonga people, and others, have come to be known as 'Shangaans'... Many Shona Ndaу call themselves Shangaans as they were also associated with the Gaza Empire ... The Duma have also called themselves

Shangaans on occasions, falsely, to obtain employment on the Rand ... there are peoples of widely divergent languages who may at times call themselves Shangaan, i.e. Duma, Ndaou, Chopi, Tonga, as well as the Hlengwe ...”.

*A Concise Encyclopedia of Zimbabwe* (1988: 288) refers to the term ‘Ndaou’ or ‘Shangane’ as an “ethnic and linguistic term, for a major group of Shona speaking peoples.” Here, the term Shangane is used interchangeably with the term Ndaou. Although there seems to have been a ‘conqueror-conquered’ relationship in the beginning, the Ndaou and the Gaza Nguni were later almost one and the same thing if not the same. According to MacGonagle (2007: 87), citing a Chikore resident, “... the Ndaou and the Nguni ‘feel that they belonged to the same clan once upon a time.’”

In interviews with Ndaou people, it becomes apparent that the differences between the Gaza Nguni and the Zulu are blurred. The terms are used interchangeably although the Zulu chiefdom was quite small compared to larger Nguni states such as Ndwandwe, Mthethwa, and Ngwane at the beginning of the nineteenth century. The Zulu kingdom grew under Shaka and the Ndaou elders transferred the powerful image of the Zulu warrior who was violent and ruthless to the Gaza Nguni who were similar oppressors (MacGonagle, 2008: 40; 2007: 97). For most Ndaou people, there is no distinction between the Shangaan, Zulu and Ndebele. MacGonagle (2007: 98) mentions “According to one Ndaou elder living in Chikore, Zimbabwe, the Ndaou say that ‘Shangani, Zulu, and Ndebele are one and the same thing.’”

### **3.3.8 NDAU COMMON SUFFERING**

Common suffering has already been mentioned to have been a factor that helped craft Ndauness. MacGonagle (2007: 14, 24) avers, “... in the nineteenth century... the Ndaou endured overrule at the hands of the Gaza Nguni...”. She asserts that, “The Gaza Nguni created tremendous upheaval when they left southern Mozambique with their army to rule over the Ndaou area in the nineteenth century... the leader Ngungunyana’s rule, generally considered harsh, and ... his decision to force large numbers of Ndaou to follow him back to the original Gaza Nguni capital in southern Mozambique at Bilene...”

Before the invasion by the Gaza Nguni, the Rozvi had also 'invaded' Ndaue territory. MacGonagle (2007: 45) remarks, "...for the Ndaue, the Rozvi presence was another encounter that served to shape a sense of Ndaueess." She adds that, "Political and economic situations day in and day out influenced identities for the Ndaue..." and that "...early contacts with outsiders heightened group awareness among the Ndaue...A sense of belonging tied the Ndaue to each other over time as they went about their daily lives" (MacGonagle, 2007: 51, 52).

The Ndaue acknowledge that the invasions shaped or rather reshaped their history. They were a defining aspect of the latter. This suffering was spread over a long period of time. As already established, MacGonagle (2007: 93; 2008: 33-34) notes that, "The difficult time and 'problem' that the Ndaue attribute to Ngungunyana actually began two generations before his time with the arrival of Ngungunyana's grandfather, Soshangane (also known as Manukosi)." Ngungunyana, alluded to earlier, must have been a very fierce personality. According to MacGonagle (2007: 93; 2008: 36), "... for many Ndaue elders today, the name Ngungunyana is synonymous with all the memories associated with distinct, and at times short-lived, periods of overrule clouded by terror. The Ndaue have condensed their memories of Nguni dominance like a telescope to focus mainly on Ngungunyana." MacGonagle (2007: 105) adds that, "The Ndaue recall an incredible assortment of memories surrounding their experience of living under a tyrant at the end of the nineteenth century. Ngungunyana's legacy casts a large shadow that dwarfs the presence of his predecessors, Mzila and Soshangane ...".

To recap, the Ndaue and the Gaza Nguni were separate groups of people although the lines separating the two appear to have been blurred with the passage of time. The former were greatly affected by the presence of the latter. MacGonagle (2008: 31) mentions that, "For the Ndaue, overrule by the Gaza Nguni led to dramatic changes as they lived under the shadow of the tyranny."

### **3.3.9 TOTEMS AND CLANS**

Totems were, and remain very important among the Ndaue people. They are used as praise names and are also central in determining whom to marry, or not. A totem

(*mutupo*) is a clan symbol. It may be an animal or a local and/or a physical feature such as a tree, a river, or a pool. A few exist of insects, such as termites. Animal totems are more popular: those who belong to a clan signified by a certain totemic animal should not eat that specific animal. People who share the same totem should not marry but, in exceptional cases where they did marry, the *vakwasha* (sons-in-law) would pay a fine. The fine symbolically broke the relation (*kucheka ukama*) between the two clans or sub-clans. Large clans were however, divided into sub-clans with different totems, making it possible for members of different sub-clans to marry (MacGonagle, 2007: 54-55; Vijfhuizen, 2002: 18; *Encyclopaedia Rhodesia*, 1973: 360; Shoko, 2007: 18; Rayner, 1962: 55; Hatendi, 1973: 136, 137).

In line with the above, MacGonagle (2007: 54) notes that “Clans and totems were two underlying principles of Ndaou social structures, and membership in a Ndaou totemic group was one enduring identity marker.”

It is important to note that totems are inherited from the paternal line. According to Rennie (1973: 90), “Every Ndaou person inherited through his father, membership in an exogamous totemic clan ... By tradition, there were twelve original clans (supposedly created by Chiphaphami Shiriyedenga, the first Mutema), but with the passage of time a number of branches were created.” Rennie (1973: 90-91) gives the following as the original *mitupo*: Mwoyo (*ne muropa ngombe*) (heart (and blood of the cow)); Dziva (lit. pool); Mbizi (zebra); Bumphi (wild dog); Shoko (monkey), Gwerekwete (ant-bear); Nzou (elephant); Gwai (sheep); Shiri (bird); Ishwa (termite); Nungu (porcupine); and Nhuka (eland). He (1973: 91) notes that, “These are Shona and Ndaou clans.”

Vijfhuizen (2002: 18) mentions different examples of totems: mombe (cattle), wild dog (sigauke or chihwa), termite (dhliwayo), eland (mhofu/shava), bird (shiri), zebra (dube or mbizi). As established earlier, she (Vijfhuizen, 2002: 18) reports that “The big clans, like cattle, are divided into sub-clans (*chidao*; pl: *zvidao*) such as leg (*gumbo*) and heart (*mwoyo*).”

There are several practical functions of totems among the Ndaou. Vijfhuizen (2002: 18) asserts that, “Ndaou women and men make use of their totems in jokes, in marriage and often in support of a particular side in the case of conflicts. When conflicts are complicated, and cannot be solved by those who are involved or by the consulted aunt

(*vatete*), a person from a totem other than that of the parties in dispute is requested to negotiate. Usually the closest relative in another totem is chosen to become the negotiator, often the son of a *vatete* (*muzukuru*). Being from another totem, he is seen as being more neutral.”

### 3.3.10 CHIEFTAINCIES

The point has already been made that the Ndaou chiefs are believed to have been brothers. As established Ndaou chiefs were and remain custodians of Ndaou culture and cultural practices. MacGonagle (2007: 57) submits that, “One history of Musikavanhu alleges that the founders of the Mutema, Musikavanhu, and Mapungwana chieftaincies were all brothers...”. Meredith (1903: 339) mentions that, “There are ten paramount chiefs in the District (most likely Gazaland), all are independent, but Mutema is regarded as the father of the people and is respected by all accordingly.” The paramount chiefs are given ‘in order of importance’ as Mutema (tribe Wasanga), Musikavanu (tribe Wadondo), Garyadza (tribe Wanyamazha), Mutambara (tribe Wagargwe), Mapungwana (tribe Warovi), Ngorima (tribe Wahodi), Chikukwa (tribe Wangwemi), Sagwenzi (tribe Wagwenzi) and Garawha (tribe Madombge) (Meredith, 1903: 339-344).

According to Latham (1965), Ndimba, Ngorima, Chikukwa, Mutambara, Muusha are chiefs recognised by Government. Only Muusha had functional *masadunhu* (kraal heads): Dzingire and Guryanga or Gudyanga. All the others fall under Chimanimani District with the exception of Ndimba, who is orientated more to Chipinge than to Chimanimani. Saurombe was not recognised by Government but his chieftaincy was re-recognised by the government in about 2008 CE.

The belief that the Ndaou chiefs broke away from the Rozvi state has been in existence for a very long time. Meredith (1925: 54), as established states, “Shiriyedenga and Nyakuyimba broke away from the Varozi [sic!], the then ruling nation between the Limpopo and the Zambezi Rivers ...” adding (Meredith, 1925: 54) that “The history of the Musikavanhu line of chiefs is interesting... Shiriyedenga (Bird of the Sky) was really the leader of the trek, and his line of chiefs has always been regarded as the principal one in the district, but they have no power over other chiefs, who are regarded as

paramount chiefs in their own areas.” According to Rennie (1973: 54), “Most highland Ndaou chiefs claim a common origin in a single migration from the early state of Mbire.”

The people that were found already inhabiting what came to be called Gazaland, were named Manyakuzvivhuta or Matsono, as has already been indicated. Rennie (1973: 55) observes that “... in many Ndaou chieftaincies the autochthonous people were given a nickname, such as ‘Makuwa,’ ‘Vazamvi,’ ‘Mutsonnu,’ ‘Masango’ (people who lived in the bush) or ‘Manyakudzivuta’ (people who ruled themselves, i.e. who had no chiefs).”

These Ndaou chieftaincies have survived until now and they continue to be known by the same names that their great grandfathers were known by.

### **3.4 MARRIAGES**

#### **3.4.1 SHONA MARRIAGES IN GENERAL**

As will be shown, Shona marriages and Ndaou marriages have a great deal in common. There are several ways of contracting marriage. Some were forced marriages, but these are dying down. For instance, a girl could be given away in marriage in infancy or even before her birth (*kuzvarira*). A marriage might also be arranged by a *munyai* (go-between), or elopement (*kutizisa*) may precede marriage. Moreover, a widow may be inherited by her deceased husband’s brother (*kugarwa nhaka*). The above are but a few examples in which marriages can be contracted among the Shona (Van der Merwe, 1981: 20-21).

Shona family structures are patrilineal and *roora* is required before a marriage can be said to have been achieved. Polygyny and *roora* payments have been recorded in Portuguese records as traditional Shona marriage customs for many centuries (Van der Merwe, 1981: 21).

Marriage is very closely related to the Shona’s religious life. In fact, chieftaincy traditions and marriage customs have strong religious connections with Shona traditional religion(s) and are consequently strongly sustained by religious beliefs (Van der Merwe, 1981: 21).

Shona customs did not approve of sexual relations outside of marriage. This is most likely because children were greatly valued among the Shona and they had to be born in a marriage setting. Every marriage was expected to produce children. The same is still true today. A man could traditionally be charged with seduction if he had sexual relations with a woman outside of marriage. Cohabiting was and is still not permissible. In Shona custom no sexual relations are lawful without the payment of part of *roora* (Van der Merwe, 1981: 21; Gelfand, 1974: 321). That sexual relations outside of marriage are not permissible does not mean that they do not occur in practice. On the contrary, the first part of the *roora* is paid, in many cases, after sexual relations will already have happened.

In cases where a girl or a woman realises that she is pregnant before any *roora* has been paid, she would normally elope. She, therefore, would not wait to be sent away from home. Gelfand (1974: 324-325; 1977: 443, 444) distinguishes between *kutiza mukumbo* and *kutizisa mukumbo*. The former relates to a case where the girl left her father's home of her own will and the latter to a situation where she was forced to leave her father's home for the man's home. *Kutiziswa* (*kutizisa mukumbo*) implies that the woman has left her father's home through the insistence of her lover, in order to marry. In either form of elopement, it is accepted that the woman has had sexual relations with the man and in most cases she would be pregnant.

Apart from eloping because of pregnancy, a girl could go to a man's home for other reasons as well. According to Gelfand (1977: 445), "There are different factors which may cause a woman to leave her father's home for her lover's, even should he not be aware that she is planning this". In some cases, a man might have promised to marry the woman but could not do so because he does not possess *roora*. The woman grows very anxious and decides to go to the man's home. Yet, in other cases, the woman simply wishes to go to her lover's home and to have sexual relations with him. Resistance to arranged marriages could be another factor. A daughter who has been pledged against her will, say to an old man, may want a man of her own choice and accordingly decides to go to him, resisting the forced pledge in the process. Poverty is another compelling factor. A woman, from a poor home, finds that her lover's home is much better than her own and decides to go to him before another woman wins the love of her man. She goes to his home, without him expecting her. In some cases, the man may not have proposed to her; she makes the proposal on her own. The parents



from either side will understand this to have been influenced by the ancestral spirits and accept it on this premise. It is still an elopement, though, because *roora* has not yet been paid for her (Gelfand, 1977: 445-446).

A girl who falls pregnant while still in her father's home would be sent to the responsible boy or man. The man would have to pay damages to the girl's father. He would despatch a small sum of money (*tsvakirai kuno*) which was meant to inform the father that his daughter was safe and that she was with the man who sent the go-between (*munyai*) with the *tsvakirai kuno* (Gelfand, 1974: 323).

The *munyai* takes *tsvakirai kuno* in the evening to the home of the woman. He throws it into the hut where the mother is or at the door if the hut is shut. Afterwards, he must move away quickly because, should he be caught, he would be beaten up. At a safe distance away, and convinced that no one will catch him in any way, he would shout out alone "*Tsvakirai kuno*", meaning "Look for your daughter this way" (Gelfand, 1977: 444).

*Tsvakirai kuno* is very important and one should make sure that it is paid to the girl's father in either form of elopement. If this *tsvakirai kuno* is not paid instantly a fine will be payable later (Gelfand, 1977: 444). The amounts charged for impregnating a girl or woman before marriage and for *roora* are not carved in stone. Gelfand (1977: 445) reports, "Damages and bridewealth amounts are not fixed but the *dare* (traditional court) will intervene should the damages claimed by the *tezvara* be unnecessarily too large."

Under normal circumstances, and before there are any sexual relations, the boy and the girl should exchange love tokens (*nhumbi*) as a sign of commitment to each other. *Roora* payment would follow this stage (Gelfand, 1977: 443; Gelfand, 1966: 107, 109).

An important aspect that featured in my interviews with Ndau people in Zimbabwe is that today *roora* seems to have become more expensive. According to Gelfand (1977: 445) "Nowadays, included in the damages are medical and educational expenses which were not so important in former days." Someone that I know recently charged US\$22 000 for his daughter and only reduced it to US\$18 000 after negotiations. This was precisely because the daughter is educated and about to complete her third degree.

In line with the aforementioned, Rayner (1962: 57) mentions that, “In the past, *lobola* seems to have been usually set at about four head of cattle; nowadays it may be as many as fifteen, sometimes with a cash payment as well. This rise in the payment has led white officials to conclude that under modern conditions, the *lobola* system is being abused, but *lobola* was always high. In the past, many fewer cattle were kept, and it was as hard to raise four head of them then as it is to raise fifteen today.”

The above does not necessarily mean that inflating bridewealth is justified. Bourdillon (1976: 45) admits that bridewealth gives status to the wife and to the marriage but acknowledges, at the same time, that bridewealth has been inflated to a degree that disturbs many. He notes that this inflation is in the more developed areas, meaning people who have been exposed to Westernisation and/or capitalism are more prone to inflating bridewealth compared to those who have not.

Paying at least the first part of *roora* or at least the *tsvakirai kuno* is a means of avoiding complications should anything happen to the girl or woman. Should she die before anything is paid, the woman’s father can make life very difficult for the family of the man who had married his daughter. If a man had paid a certain amount of the *roora* but his wife died before the *roora* was paid up, the father would be much more understanding and would agree to the burial of his daughter, unlike a situation when nothing has been paid (Gelfand, 1977: 446).

### **3.4.2 NDAU MARRIAGES IN PARTICULAR**

Several aspects of Ndaу marriage are the same as those of the other Shona dialectical groups, with minor variations in certain instances. As will be established, the Ndaу expected every male or female to marry, and failure to do so was viewed with contempt. Consequently, they put numerous concessions in place to make sure that everyone was able to marry (or be married). MacGonagle (2007: 62) asserts that, “The Ndaу expected all young women to marry and follow “a path” of marriage so that two families could forge a bond.” As such, the family was a very important unit among the Ndaу. The past tense has been deliberately used here because many of these practices and principles have changed or evolved over time, with some dying out whilst others continue to live on, albeit in different forms.

In line with the above, MacGonagle (2007: 59) asserts that, "Overall, the Ndaou used various methods to facilitate courtship and promote marriage arrangements." In other words, marriage was something to be cherished and promoted in any way possible. As already noted, Vijfhuizen (2002: 20) observes, "The most important reason for exploring marriage is that new relations are established through marriage ... Marriage is said to be important because it allows the *dzinza* (patrikin) to grow; creates children; and provides security (*kuchengetwa*) in old age...". This issue of security surfaced frequently in the interviews that I conducted with the Ndaou people of Chimanimani as will be evident in the data presentation chapters.

There were many reasons why marriages would be conducted or arranged among the Ndaou. One was food security. MacGonagle (2007: 60) mentions that, "The pursuit of food security among the Ndaou was clearly played out in their marriage arrangements. The custom of *mutengatore*, or the exchange of daughters or sisters, reflects the desire to strengthen social bonds and promote prosperous relationships. If two families did not have enough money or means to offer bridewealth (*roora*), they would practice *mutengatore*. Each man would respect the other as a father-in-law, even though in reality each was a son-in-law as well." More details about *mutengatore* will be given later when I discuss different types of Ndaou marriage.

The community-oriented aspect of Ndaou marriages can be shown in the fact that some marriages were conducted for the benefit of siblings. MacGonagle (2007: 60) mentions that, "Marriages were also arranged to benefit the brothers of young women. One elder recalled that if the brother of a young girl wanted to marry, 'the family would sell the girl child to anyone willing so that the brother will get the proceeds from that trade in order to go and pay bridewealth (*roora*) for his would-be wife'." The notion that the girls were 'sold' I regard as a misreading of the practice by uninformed observants. It was not 'selling' at all but exchanging the girl(s) for the *roora* that the brother(s) needed in order to be married.

Debts were also another factor. According to MacGonagle (2007: 60), "Some girls, often those reaching puberty, were betrothed to compensate for a debt. Marriages also involved loans, with a father borrowing what he needed and promising to give his daughter in return. In this instance, a young woman was betrothed to a family before members of the family decided on her intended husband. These networks and

agreements indicate the desire of Ndaou communities to strengthen relationships and secure alliances.” Although critics are quick to point out that these marriages were ‘forced’ and that the girls were not allowed to exercise ‘freedom of choice’, these marriages helped solve certain social problems and economic challenges as well.

A number of the Ndaou aspects of marriage that involved ‘force’ especially as regards the girl child were not tolerated by missionaries and colonialists. In fact, these could have pressed both the missionaries and colonialists to be hard on Ndaou cultural practices and to seek to abolish such marriages. MacGonagle (2007: 60) notes that, “After missionaries and British colonial officials settled in the highlands of Southern Rhodesia (Zimbabwe) in the late nineteenth century, they prohibited African marriages based on clientage arrangements. With the Native Marriages Ordinance of 1901, only cattle and cash could be used as bridewealth ... This placed a burden on young men to work for cash wages in the colonial economy ... However, exchange marriages, *mutengatore*, continued despite the new law.”

*Mutengatore* was one important way in which people who did not have *roora* could marry. If *mutengatore* was not used, goods or livestock had to be paid as *roora*. Before money came into use, a thick chain of beads called *gapa reusanga* or *magoroza eusanga* could sometimes be used as *roora*. *Chuma* (beads) could also be used, as in Bilene and Delagoa Bay (both in Mozambique). Goats and *mutengatore* replaced chain of beads as *roora*. Six goats could be enough for *roora*. Hoes were also a common form of *roora*. Some of the hoes were merely blunt stones. Less fortunate men used a wooden hoe (*mutika*) as *roora* (MacGonagle, 2007: 60-61).

Cases where a woman was either widowed or was infertile were also handled in specific ways among the Ndaou, bearing in mind that child-bearing was a central aspect of Ndaou marriage. According to MacGonagle (2007: 61), “... if a man died, his wife usually remained with his family and received care from them in an arrangement where the widow was inherited and married to a close family member such as the deceased’s brother or son... If a woman was infertile, either a replacement – often one of her sisters – was given to her husband, or her family returned the bridewealth (*roora*).”

The same would apply to cases where women could not bear any more children. MacGonagle (2007: 61) observes, “After a woman passed her childbearing years, her husband might marry a younger woman to produce even more progeny. This new wife

was often the daughter of the first wife's brother (a niece). The relationship between the two wives could be characterized by either jealousy or a working partnership." In other words, child-bearing was not something a married woman could choose to do or not to. It was expected that every married woman was supposed to bear children. In situations where she could not, alternatives were sought: in some cases she would be given concoctions or herbs that would successfully assist her to be able to bear children.

Something that has not been discussed so far is that men were also expected to be fertile. If a man was found to be infertile, he would also be treated with medicines and concoctions that would in some cases help. If the problem would continue, even after these were administered, arrangements were made for the man's brother to sleep with the former's wife so that children could be born in this marriage. The 'infertile' brother was not supposed to know that his wife was having sexual relations with his brother, and children that were born out of this arrangement belonged to the 'infertile man'.

The Ndau would go to lengths to make sure that everyone could marry. Men who could not pay *roora* would, in some cases, work for prospective in-laws for some time as a substitute for doing so. This was called *ugariri*. This gave men without *roora* an opportunity to marry. The man who would work for a wife was called a *mugariri* (son-in-law with labour obligations) (MacGonagle, 2007: 59; Rennie, 1973: 54).

The aforementioned agrees with Hatendi's (1973: 137) assertion that, "Celibacy has no place in Shona society for marriage is the natural goal of both sexes... An unmarried person is regarded as ungrateful to his parents and family-group who have brought him up and trained him for life. To continue the family lineage is an obligation." There were, however, some few exceptions to this prevalent position.

*Roora* was, and remains, a major aspect of Ndau marriage. Although marriage ceremonies largely revolve around the negotiation and payment of *roora*, among the Ndau there is another ceremony where the bride is ceremoniously escorted to the groom's family by a group of girls and women who prepare *sadza* (thick porridge from maize meal) and beer to take with them. Upon reaching the groom's home, they sing, "*Tauya nayee. Makoti. Tauya nayee*," as a way of announcing the bride's arrival. The groom's family then invites them to the homestead where the bride and company receive some token gifts. The bride's company perform chores that need to be done

before leaving on the second day (MacGonagle, 2007: 61-62). In my interviews with the Ndau, I was told this is called *mutimba* – a Ndau marriage equivalent of the white wedding. This takes place after *roora* has been paid or at least after the first part of it has been paid.

Certain societally agreed upon procedures had to be followed in Ndau marriages. According to Vijfhuizen (2002: 20), “Before a girl and boy marry, they have usually known each other for some time...If they wish to marry, both have to follow certain channels (channel/s: *murandu*). Each must inform certain family members who send them to other relatives in their own patrikin ... Usually, the father and his brothers (also fathers) are the last in the channel to be informed.” Vijfhuizen (2002: 20) notes that “The channel for each marriage will differ”. As already established, MacGonagle (2007: 59) records, “If a man wanted to marry a particular young woman, he was expected to contact the woman’s paternal aunt or grandmother to initiate a relationship. The paternal aunt, known as *vatete*, was a powerful figure in marriage negotiations and relations.” She (2007: 59) adds that, “Courtship between two adolescents ... was an accepted practice among the Ndau.”

As has been mentioned under Shona marriages, love tokens were supposed to be exchanged in Ndau practice as well. Vijfhuizen (2002: 20) avers that, “Love tokens are exchanged where the channel has started, either at the place of the girl’s or boy’s *vatete*.” Shoko (2007: 27) submits that, “... tokens (*nduma*) in the form of handkerchiefs and underwear... are a sign of love and may be required to be produced as exhibit before the elders if the boy refuses to marry the girl.” This is in harmony with Hatendi (1973: 140) who mentions that, “With marriages that begin with courtship, which are on the increase, a verbal acceptance of the proposal is not enough. It must be acted. Both must be prepared to part with an article in their possession, failing which pieces of grass are exchanged in lieu of an acceptable love token.”

The Ndau, therefore, allowed for a wide range of forms of marriages to suit almost everyone, if not every single person. According to Vijfhuizen (2002: 21-22) Ndau women and men distinguish eight types of marriages. These were mentioned in Chapter 2.

Most of these are no longer being utilised. It has been noted that for Vijfhuizen (2002: 22-23), “The frequency of the different types of marriages is changing”. Further discussion will be undertaken in the research findings chapters (Chapters 5 to 7).

Several changes have been witnessed in the Ndaou marriage practices as indicated earlier on. Vijfhuizen (2002: 23) notes that, “Husbands no longer work at the place of the parents-in-law (*kutemaugariri* marriage).” According to Chigumi (1923: 79), “The custom of ‘*kugarira*’ or ‘*ugariri*’ means literally ‘to wait for’. Briefly, it is the practice by which a man of a native tribe wishing to marry resides at the village of a parent or guardian with a marriageable daughter, and there serves personally, in return for which he is given the daughter to wife.” The origins of this practice are not easily traceable. Chigumi (1923: 79) submits that, “In what native communities this system originated is not definitely known, but it is suggested that it has had a vogue in most Bantu races who were not rich in cattle or small stock. One is familiar, of course, with the instance from the Bible of Jacob and his seven years’ service for Rachel.” Part of the reason why this type of marriage is no longer being practised is possibly because of the use of money and the fact that, theoretically, every man is able to work for money to pay *roora*.

As intimated, Government interference or legislation, and HIV/Aids are other factors that have contributed to the abandoning or extinction of other forms of Ndaou marriage (Vijfhuizen (2002: 23). Legislation in Zimbabwe recognises two official marriages, as was indicated earlier (Vijfhuizen, 2002: 23). Both these involve the issuing of marriage certificates.

It ought to be reiterated that not all marriages are registered among the Ndaou people. There are a great number of customary marriages that are not registered but are considered to be ‘full marriages’ in Ndaou settings. Customary marriage (*kuroorana mumisha* - to marry in the homesteads) has no certificate and is not necessarily registered. *Roora* is paid in both civil and customary marriages (Vijfhuizen, 2002: 23).

To recap, it is noteworthy to reiterate that although the most notable existing forms of marriage among the Ndaou are *mabvunziro* (or *matorwa*) and *kutizisa/kutizira*, other forms of Ndaou marriage also still exist in small proportions. They are practiced but kept under wraps. According to Vijfhuizen (2002: 23), “*Kutizira*, *matorwa*, *kuputswa*, *chigara mapfiwa*, *kugarwanhaka* and *ngozi* forms of marriage still exist. These are customary

marriages, but when a marriage certificate is obtained the marriages become civil.” My interviews with the Ndau in Chimanimani confirmed that even the banned forms of marriage still exist in isolation among the Ndau.

### 3.4.3 BRIDEWEALTH (*ROORA*)

*Roora* has refused to die out over time. According to Hassing (1960: 321), “In the Bantu social system ... *lobola* ... has caused quite a debate in the missionary movement ... the custom ... is a social custom which in our day usually is regarded by the anthropologists and by many missionaries as being a stabilizing factor in the Bantu marriage. The marriage is really not complete until all the cattle have passed from one family to the other...”. *Roora* has been, and remains a very central aspect of Shona and Ndau marriages.

The missionaries misunderstood, and taught against, this practice. Their attitude towards it was mostly negative. Some of the missionaries considered the custom to be the same as wife purchase. As will be shown in the Chapter 4, SAGM missionaries maintained that the custom was contrary to Christian principle. They, however, did not ask their members to refrain from taking or giving *roora* (Hassing, 1960: 321-322).

Hassing (1960: 322) records, “In 1915 the Southern Rhodesia Missionary Conference agreed to the following statement: “That in the opinion of this Conference, the practice of *lobola* is the greatest obstacle to the highest development of the Natives of this territory and this Conference contends that legislation should aim at its total abolition.” A similar, but not quite as categorical a resolution, was adopted unanimously fifteen years later.” More evidence will be provided in Chapter 4 with the aid of quotes from primary sources. Irrespective of these sentiments, *roora* was not successfully abolished and it continues unabated today.

The missionaries seem to have struggled to understand a system that ran parallel with their own system(s) of marriage. Hassing (1960: 323) declares, “It cannot be claimed that the missionaries did not know what they were talking about. They knew the custom very well from many angles, but there seems to have been little appreciation for the good aspects of the custom and the great stabilizing factor it has been in the Bantu family life. Basic in the conflict were opposing views of society. The Bantu society was



centred in the clan; the outlook of the missionaries was individualistic.” In other words, there was a battle of opposing world-views in the missionaries’ deliberate lack of appreciation for *roora*. The practice did not conform to their ways of doing things which they, by default, considered to be ‘the most correct ways’. This will be explored further in Chapter 4.

While *roora* has stood the test of time, it is important to emphasise that its forms have constantly changed over years. MacGonagle (2007: 62) observes, “Through time, bridewealth, in its many forms, has remained a constant factor in Ndaу marriages...”. Cloth, hoes, chains of beads, and livestock were used as bridewealth before the introduction of British pounds as currency at the end of the nineteenth century (MacGonagle, 2007: 58). Hoes and beads are no longer used for *roora* payments today among the Ndaу, nor are British pounds. Cattle nonetheless continue to be used in *roora* payments together with money, which is currently the United States dollar (and bond notes) in Zimbabwe.

In emphasising the revolutionary aspect of the introduction of money, Vijfhuizen (2002: 29) notes that, “Before the introduction of money, scarce goods such as hoes, spears or beads were requested for bridewealth. Nowadays it is money, groceries and cattle.”

Men who could pay *roora* were sought after by fathers with daughters and by women as well. MacGonagle (2007: 58-59) records that, “In Ndaу society, a father hoped that a wealthy man would be the husband of his daughter so that he could recoup a sizable bridewealth for himself and guarantee a secure future for the young woman”. This was not a one-way process, though. Women also sought men who would be good husbands and who would be able to pay *roora* to benefit their families. Among such were skilled hunters. Men who were not as talented or wealthy relied on *roora* from female siblings to be married themselves (MacGonagle, 2007: 59). Today, in most cases, young men have to work for their own money for *roora* without getting much, if any, help from anyone. The fathers no longer help their sons that much in raising money for *roora*. Vijfhuizen (2002: 29) mentions that while “In the past, it was fathers who assisted their sons in paying bridewealth, at present, it is more often the sons themselves who pay the amount requested.” According to Vijfhuizen (2002: 56) “Parents no longer always assist their sons in paying bridewealth.”

In my interviews with the Ndau, there was a general feeling that *roora* is more expensive now than it was before. Vijfhuizen (2002: 29) asserts that, "Some men complained that the amount is too high and that bridewealth is an African business nowadays. The young argue that bridewealth was much easier long ago, when only a hoe and/or beads were requested. However, such goods were extremely difficult to obtain in those days and people lost their lives to look for beads in South Africa." She adds, "The young believe that marrying today is more expensive than in the past, but the old said marrying in the past was also expensive. They explained that bridewealth during the 1930-1940s was 30 pounds and an old lady pointed out that 30 pounds was difficult to get and would buy a great deal..." So, it might actually be the case that *roora* has always been difficult to raise from generations past to those present; yet there seems to be a growth in trends where fathers charge exorbitant amounts for their daughters. This may be due to mere greed or capitalist tendencies where profit is sought in almost any venture.

The purpose and function of *roora* seems to have altered over time. According to Vijfhuizen (2002: 56), "In the old days one of the functions of bridewealth was to compensate the wife's family for the loss of the woman's productive labour. Nowadays, considerable financial investment is required for a daughter to be productive... these costs need to be compensated for. Bridewealth now becomes compensation for the economic costs incurred in bringing up the daughter." This is one of the main challenges of modern day *roora* payments. This 'compensation' makes *roora* very expensive.

As established, there is no fixed price for *roora*. According to Vijfhuizen (2002: 29), "... bridewealth is a negotiated practice ... It takes long, usually more than ten years, before bridewealth has been paid completely." In instances, the full amount of *roora* will only be reached some twenty or even more years after the initial payment. Vijfhuizen (2002: 33) reports, "The Ndau usually refer to the total bridewealth as *pfuma*. Some say *roora*, but that is more commonly used among other Shona groups." In my interviews, I noticed that the two terms were used interchangeably.

The Ndau want the *roora* practice to continue but they, in most cases, complain about the excessive charges. For Vijfhuizen (2002: 57), "Both women and men want the bridewealth practice to continue, as it is seen as evidence of reciprocity, and

establishing bonds between families and supplying cash needs. Bridewealth in this sense can be seen as a form of social security.” There is, however, need to curtail the ballooning charges. A regulatory measure of some sort may need to be effected although it may be difficult to police.

As established, marriage practices and aspects of Ndau marriage have not remained constant over time. They also seem to be open to manipulation in one way or another. According to Vijfhuizen (2002: 58), “Both women and men guard the continuity of certain aspects of marriage, bridewealth, divorce and levirate practices. However, they also transform and manipulate rules, beliefs, norms, and values and thereby shape and change those practices.”

#### **3.4.4 POLYGAMY/POLYGyny**

Another practice that the missionaries were completely opposed to was polygyny. The word ‘polygamy’ or ‘polygyny’ in this study is used to refer to a union of a man with two or more wives. Having many wives, among the Ndau (and the Shona) was a sign of wealth but the same cannot be said today. Men with many wives were considered wealthy, just as were those with a large number of cattle. Having many children was equally a sign of wealth. Polygamy was a way of life among the Ndau and Shona (MacGonagle, 2007: 59; Gelfand, 1973: 176-78).

The missionaries, as intimated, never sought to understand the phenomenon of polygamy. Hassing (1960: 323) observes, “...From the beginning a rigid attitude was taken (by missionaries), that is a polygamist who wanted to become a member of the Christian Church was forced to make some other arrangement for all his wives except the first one. The objections raised to this way of solving the dilemma have been at least two. The standards set were not the ones found in the New Testament, and the church had no right to make the standards of admission higher than the ones Jesus himself had set. It was not Christian, and it was humanly and sociologically wrong, to let the innocent wives live on without a husband, and the children without one of the parents.” I concur with these sentiments. It appears to have been ill-advised to send a lot of women and children away from their husbands and fathers.

Apart from polygamy or polygyny, there were several other practices that the missionaries did not approve of, as has already been established. One was pledging girl children in marriage sometimes even before they were born (Hassing (1960: 324). The missionaries helped to stamp out such practices. As Hassing (1960: 324-325) points out, "With the coming of the British and the missionaries, these girls discovered that they could obtain their freedom and many of them took refuge in the various mission stations. When the father turned up to get the child, the girl would refuse to go, and the missionaries would not compel her to leave. The missionary might take the case to the Native Commissioner, and if she in front of him refused to follow her father, the girl would be allowed to remain at the mission."

### **3.5 CONCLUSION**

Chapter 3 sought to give an orientation and/or background to facilitate an understanding of the research findings chapters (Chapters 5 to 7). The chapter employed postcolonialism in line with the thesis' paradigm of study. It focused on the Ndaou people of Chimanimani, Zimbabwe. Chapter 3 consists of three major sections. The first section is on the Geography and History of the Ndaou people. The second is on Ndaou Identities/Ndauness. The third major section focused on Marriages. All the sections employed the use of different subheadings. The chapter detailed how the Shona and Ndaou came to be termed the Shona/Ndaou. Aspects that have been associated with being Ndaou (identity markers) were highlighted: ear piercing, *nyora* (scarification), and *pika* (dots on several parts of women's bodies). As established, Reciprocity has to do with the cultural borrowing between the Ndaou and the people that they came into contact with, including but not exclusively the Shangaan.

Chapter 4 will now present South Africa General Mission (SAGM) Missionaries. Informed by Chapters 1 to 4 the thesis will then present research findings in subsequent chapters (Chapters 5 to 7).

## CHAPTER 4

### SOUTH AFRICA GENERAL MISSION (SAGM) MISSIONARIES

#### 4.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter 3 focused on the Ndaup people of Chimanimani, Zimbabwe. This chapter deals with the SAGM missionaries that evangelised them. Just like Chapter 3, Chapter 4 seeks to give an orientation and/or some background to facilitate an understanding of the research findings chapters that ensue (Chapters 5 to 7). As emphasised in all the preceding chapters, Chapter 4 employs postcolonialism as the paradigm that undergirds the study. Chapter 2 already gave a brief history of the missionaries' work in Zimbabwe. This chapter focuses particularly on the SAGM that evangelised Chimanimani District (then part of British Gazaland) and the church that was born out of this Mission, the Association of the United Baptist Churches of Zimbabwe (UBC). The chapter comprises of six major parts. The first deals with Missionaries in Africa in General. The second is on Missionaries' Work in Zimbabwe. The third focuses on South Africa General Mission, with particular emphasis on its founders (Andrew Murray, Martha Osborne, and William Spencer Walton), the Geographical Expansion of the Mission, the Trek into Zimbabwe, the Holy Spirit's Visit at Rusitu (1915), Later Years in the Mission/the Church, United Baptist Church (UBC), and Serving in Mission (SIM). A brief history of the latter years of the Mission or the Church in Zimbabwe is provided specifically to show that UBC's position on marriages has not changed even after black clergy took over from the missionaries. The fourth major section is on SAGM Missionaries' Attitude towards the Ndaup and their Culture. The fifth is devoted to Ndaup People's Attitude towards the Missionaries. The last section discusses Missionaries and Imperialism. South Africa will be shown to be a central base as far as the evangelisation of Zimbabwe is concerned. All this intends to situate the study and to prepare for the research findings chapters.

This chapter uses quotes from primary sources that show how SAGM missionaries' perceptions about the Ndaup and the Ndaup marriage practices helped the missionaries to undermine Ndaup cultural practices while at the same time elevating their own Victorian marriage practices. The said primary sources were obtained from various volumes of the *South African Pioneer*. Procter (1965: 7, 12), himself an SAGM missionary who served in Angola, Mozambique, and at the headquarters in South

Africa between 1920 and 1960, mentions that Mrs Osborn (one of the founders of SAGM), “launched a quarterly magazine named the ‘*PIONEER*’ in October 1886”. This magazine was later called ‘*South African Pioneer*’ and it helped broadcast pieces written by SAGM missionaries from their different ‘fields’. It is this rich resource that this chapter taps into.

## **4.2 MISSIONARIES IN AFRICA IN GENERAL**

As was mentioned above, Chapter 4 seeks to give background and/or orientation about the SAGM missionaries. It will begin by situating the SAGM missionaries among the missionaries in Africa in general.

There are numerous publications about missionaries in Africa. According to Mercy Amba Oduyoye (2003: 91), “the story of missionary engagement with Africa has been told and retold”. It is in no way a new area of discussion. The history of SAGM is however, less well known.

Hildebrandt (1996: 80), among others, narrates the story of what caused the missionaries to travel from their own lands to far-away ones in the first place. After mentioning that by 1750 there were only three or four small Protestant groups interested in missionary work in Africa, he goes on to indicate that there was a great revival among Protestants in Europe and America from the period 1700 to 1790. This revival raised the desire among many Christians to end the slave trade and caused many Christians in America and Europe to be concerned about the needs of salvation of people in other parts of the world. For Hildebrandt, it was because of this desire to reach out with the Gospel to other people that many different Protestant missionary societies were founded.

The foregoing is in agreement with Dachs’ (1973: 53) assertion that, “Certainly the great Protestant missionary societies that rose from the English evangelical revival of the late eighteenth century were founded out of religious conviction.”

Although missionaries and colonialism are almost always bundled together, Paas (2006: 126) notes that, “in general, missionary presence preceded colonialist presence’ and that ‘colonialist rule and Christian mission originated from different

agencies in different times". In other words, missionaries and settler colonialists were two separate entities originating in different times, with different preoccupations. This however does not mean that they were completely separate from each other on the ground. I shall demonstrate that missionaries were pleased to work under the colonial governments that provided them with land and support in many different ways.

It would be inappropriate, however, to perpetuate a perception that the missionaries served just as a 'front' for colonialists. Missionaries are almost always thought to have been part of a grant scheme by the white colonialists to, in some way, sedate or blindfold Africans with religion while the colonialists were busy colonising African territories. I am of the conviction that the missionaries and the colonisers were on different undertakings although the lines separating them were blurred in the eyes of onlookers.

While Mugambi (1989: 38) agrees with the statement that the evangelical revival in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries was an important factor contributing to the rise of the modern missionary movement, he goes on to give other factors or other ways in which missionaries understood missions. Besides seeking to save the world from damnation, Mugambi (1989: 40) asserts that mission was also understood in terms of "civilising" those peoples who were considered to be in 'primitive' stages of development. It was taken for granted that the Western world represented the highest form of civilisation and that this civilisation was a Christian one (Mugambi, 1989: 41). Perhaps this is one of the factors that contributed to the negative attitude that most of the missionaries held about everything that was African. They did not take time to try and understand the way the Africans were doing things. It was not on their agenda to do so – theirs was to show the way. This will be seen in the attitude of SAGM missionaries as well towards the Ndaou and their culture and/or cultural practices. It is on this basis that Mugambi (1989: 41) asserts that some missionaries therefore considered it their primary responsibility to extend this high civilisation to the peoples with low cultures or none.

In line with the fact of the 'civilising mission', Bhebe (1973: 44-45) argues that, "Yet, as much as they were convinced [missionaries in general] of the liberating and regenerating power of the Scriptures, the missionaries also emphasized the role of western education in ensuring the permanence of the Universal Church. Civilization in

its simplest and most practical form meant the adoption by Africans of European behaviour, clothing and other western customs...”

Another view of mission was as an endeavour to improve the economic life of African peoples in the process of teaching them about Christianity. It was thought that Christianity would not take root until the people learned new methods of trade, agriculture and industrial skills (Mugambi, 1989: 41). This is evident in Zimbabwe, in the various parts of the country where different missionary groups were involved. They inevitably had at heart the goal of changing the lives of the people for the better. They, in other words, were quite keen to open the minds of the African people to a whole new world of possibilities, a world in which the latter would be able to do things that they had never envisaged. This, however, had other intended aims as well. As they introduced the African to the new methods of trade, agriculture and skills they also sought to erase the African’s civilisation and create Africans ‘in the missionaries’ image’.

While it is true that the early missionaries perceived themselves as the models that the Africans had to emulate in everything, it is an interesting fact of history that this attitude altered in the nineteenth century. Mugambi (1989: 42) points out that: “Towards the end of the nineteenth century there developed in Europe a great interest in the study of the African religions and cultures. The previous view that African peoples did not have any religion or culture was modified in that development so that early in the twentieth century the popular view was that African peoples had their own religions and knew something about God. However, these religions were considered to be in the primitive stages of evolution, and the objective of Christian missionary activity would be to erase the religious understanding of those peoples and replace it with the highest religion which was thought to have been attained in Christianity”. In practice, therefore, the attitude of the missionaries towards African traditional practices and cultures remained negative.

It is a pity that even in this later position, African religion(s) and African cultures were not studied for what they were but for what the Westerners wanted them to be. There is, I suppose, much that the missionaries and the Westerners at large missed because of their denigration of the African religions and cultures.



Some missionaries travelled to India; this encouraged other Westerners to go out as missionaries elsewhere in the world. In Africa, before 1800, four different missionary societies tried to establish work in Sierra Leone for they felt that Sierra Leone, a colony of freed slaves, was the safest place to use as a base for reaching the tribes of Africa with the Gospel (Hildebrandt, 1996: 81-82).

Another area, in Africa, where the new missionary societies attempted to work was South Africa, particularly the region around the Cape (Hildebrandt 1996: 82). This is more interesting and probably more relevant to this work for, as pointed out, it was from South Africa that the various missionary groups were to go up north to places such as Botswana, Malawi and Zimbabwe (then Southern Rhodesia) to evangelise.

Establishing missions and winning converts was never easy for missionaries. Jenkins and Stebbing (1966:2-12) note that Robert Moffat and other missionaries to the then Matabele kingdom laboured for years without any converts around the 1850s. The same challenges were to be encountered by later missionaries as well.

#### **4.3 MISSIONARIES' WORK IN ZIMBABWE**

Smith (1928) furnishes a detailed account of missionary activities in Southern Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe). He mentions the various missionary societies that entered the different parts of Zimbabwe. The mention of 'different parts of Zimbabwe' here is deliberate. It has to be emphasised that the *modus operandi* of the missionaries in Zimbabwe was based on the principle that the different missionary groups were not supposed to compete for 'souls' in one area. As such, the different missionary groups went to different places or regions of Zimbabwe. Chitando (1998: 107) makes an implicit reference to this when he mentions that, "For a long time, the Dutch Reformed Church was the only denomination which held sway in the area (Masvingo). This was in line with the early missionaries' tacit arrangement of not jostling for souls in the same field."

Arrangements such as the ones discussed above were completely absent in urban areas. Murphree (1969: 12) notes that, "The greatest multiplication of denominations was found in the urban areas. When members of the various churches left their homes to work in the towns they set up congregations of their own denominations in their new

environment. Thus, those which had been carefully separated by comity agreements in the rural scene, found themselves side by side. Conflict between them, however, was not particularly severe since they drew their adherents from distinct tribal and geographical units, and there was no great tendency for their members to cross the lines of demarcation set thereby. The strongest conflict was between these groups as a whole and the younger proselytizing denominations which did not draw their members from a rural base.”

The same phenomenon is mentioned by Weinrich (1982: xii) who gives a different reason for it. For Weinrich (1982: xii) and Murphree (1969: 11-12), different Christian denominations predominate in different regions of the country because of land allocation. From this, one can argue that the different missionary groups travelled to different regions in the country because they were given tracts of land in those respective regions by the colonial government. Irrespective of what reason one may prefer, it remains indisputable that the different missionary groups avoided encroaching on each other's territories.

Perhaps the confusion about the connection between missionaries and colonialists could have been because of the conduct of the first missionaries to Zimbabwe. According to Weinrich (1982: 4), “The first missionaries to Zimbabwe were Protestants who reached the Ndebele well before White settlement started. But their impact on the Ndebele was economic and political rather than religious. The most outstanding early missionaries, Moffat and Helm, were great admirers of Cecil Rhodes and helped him to wrest from the Ndebele king a concession to dig for minerals in his country.” Weinrich (1982: 4) adds that the Ndebele king trusted them at first but later felt betrayed and that during the Ndebele rising that followed mission stations were burned down and converts killed. The connection of the missionaries to the colonial government cannot be denied. While colonialists and missionaries cannot be said to have been on the same assignment, colonialism and missionary work were closely connected. In other words, missionaries benefitted from the colonial system. More discussion will follow later on in this chapter.

The Ndebele were first to have contact with the missionaries, rather than the Shona. Just like the Ndebele, the Shona also reacted negatively. The Shona had been alienated from their land since Cecil Rhodes had donated large tracts of land to

missionary groups. Among the beneficiaries were the Catholic, Anglican, and Dutch Reformed Churches, among others. In light of this alienation from land, most Shona people viewed the missionaries as the same as the white settlers and colonialists (Weinrich, 1982: 4). This issue of the failure by the missionaries to distinguish themselves clearly from the other white settlers and colonialists will be revisited later.

The 1870s, 1880s and 1890s were the time of the European rush into Africa (Ranger, 1983: 211). In 1891 the Church of England began work in Rhodesia. The opportunities for evangelism in Zimbabwe soon attracted several other Protestant missions: the Wesleyan Methodists (1891), the Dutch Reformed Church (1891), the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (1893), the Seventh Day Adventists (1895), the American Methodist Episcopal Church (1896), the Brethren of Christ (1897), the SAGM (1897) on which this thesis focuses, and later the Presbyterian Church, the Salvation Army and the Church of Sweden. Roman Catholics also established works in Zimbabwe (then Rhodesia) during this time (from the late 19<sup>th</sup> into the early 20<sup>th</sup> century) but the number of their converts did not rise quickly (Hildebrandt 1996: 177-178). The SAGM also faced serious challenges in making converts for some years, as this chapter will show.

The years of the Ndebele and Shona uprisings (1896-1897) disturbed missionary work in Zimbabwe just like the Chimurenga wars later in the 1970s. However, Christian missionaries founded new mission stations from the end of the Shona rising in 1897 up to 1923 (Zvobgo, 1996: 66). It is important to emphasise that this year, 1897, was the same year that SAGM missionaries trekked into Chimanimani, Zimbabwe (then Rhodesia).

Hildebrandt (1996: 177-178), Smith (1928: 52-71) and King (1959) give the names of the missionary societies that worked in Zimbabwe as: The London Missionary Society (L.M.S.); The Roman Catholic Mission (R.C.); The Church of England (C.E.) (The Anglican Church); The Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society (W.M.M.S.); The Dutch Reformed Church of South Africa (D.R.C.S.A.); The American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (A.B.C.F.M); The Board of Foreign Missions of the Methodist Episcopal Church (M.E.F.B); The South Africa General Mission (S. A. G.M); The Brethren in Christ Church (B.C.); The Presbyterian Church of South Africa (P.C.S.A.); The Church of Central Africa-Presbyterian; The Free Presbyterian Church

of Scotland; Svenska Kyrans Mission (S.K.M.); The Swedish Free Mission (S.F.M.); The Salvation Army (S.A.); The Seventh-Day Adventists (S.D.A.); The South African Baptist Missionary Society (S.A.B.M.S.); The Church of Christ (C.C.); and The Free Methodist Church. Some of the above are alternatively given the names: The Methodist Church (U.K.); The Methodist Church (USA); and the African Methodist Episcopal Church.

This chapter turns now to focus on the SAGM missionaries who worked among, and influenced, the Ndaus of Chimanimani, Zimbabwe, in general and as regards 'marriage practices' in particular.

#### **4.4 SOUTH AFRICA GENERAL MISSION (SAGM)**

It has to be reiterated that all these missionary groups concentrated each in a different place or region in Zimbabwe. This explains why different missionaries established schools, hospitals and churches in some regions and places and not in others. For example, the SAGM established two mission schools in Chimanimani at Rusitu and Biriiri but nowhere else. It also established a hospital and Bible school at Rusitu Mission Station. This missionary organisation was later to be called Africa Evangelical Fellowship (AEF), a name which also was later dropped for the current United Baptist Church (UBC).

Although details about other missionaries' activities in Zimbabwe have been omitted, it is important to mention the body that evangelised the Mt Selinda area. In 1893, the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM) proceeded to Mount Selinda and there established their first station, and in 1894 another at Chikore (Smith, 1928: 64-65).

ABCFM also concentrated its work among the Ndaus, just like the SAGM. While SAGM ministered in the Chimanimani district of Zimbabwe, ABCFM did so in the Chipinge District but these two districts adjoin each other and are populated mostly by the Ndaus. There is evidence of the fact that the missionaries of these two missionary groups (ABCFM and SAGM) were conscious of the presence of the other group and would cooperate in certain works. Even today, members of the denominations that

emerged as a result of these two missionary organisations, sing songs or hymns from the same Ndaun hymn book.

Just like SAGM, ABCFM also changed the Mission name to a Church name. ABCFM of Mt Selinda is now called the United Church of Christ in Zimbabwe (UCCZ) (Dhube, 1997: 26).

There was a significant degree of co-operation between the ABCFM and SAGM missionaries. According to Dhube (1997: 33), “Beginning with the first hymn to be translated into ChiNdaun (Hymn 135: “Jesu Wakandida,” by Rev Douglas Wood), many others were translated or composed, with most of them done at Mt Selinda, as the Ndaun Hymn Book, like the Ndaun Bible, was used by both Rusitu and Mt Selinda.” Both working among the Ndaun people, the two Missions cooperated with each other to a certain extent.

What was to be commonly known as the SAGM) (3 January 1894, later Africa Evangelical Fellowship (AEF) (16 June, 1965), and today Serving in Mission (SIM), began as Cape General Mission (CGM) in South Africa on 12 March 1889. It was a result of the acts of three prominent figures: Martha Osborn (sometimes spelt Osborne or Osborn-Howe), Dr Andrew Murray, and William Spencer Walton (sometimes called just W. Spencer Walton or simply Spencer Walton (Kopp, 2001: 17, 28; *Serving in Mission* Website; Fuller, 2007).

Each one of the three words in ‘Cape General Mission’ carried some significance. Huntingford (1989: 9) reports that, “... The new Mission would be called the Cape General Mission: ‘Cape’ because that is where its activities were to be centred; ‘General’ because it was intended to minister to a wide variety of peoples; ‘Mission’ because its workers were to be sent by God to do His work...”.

#### **4.4.1 The founders**

The three co-founders are described as “dominant, charismatic individuals”, “charismatic” in this context signifying being able to inspire followers with devotion and enthusiasm (Dhube, 1997: 1). They are also mentioned as having shared many similarities: “... co-founders ... all of whom had been involved extensively in

evangelistic ministries both within and outside South Africa. Their thrust in ministry was strongly impacted by the emphasis of holiness of life, evangelistic fervor, and missionary zeal which characterised the Keswick Conventions of England” (Kopp, 2001: 28). Beckett (1994: 16-17) submits that, “The roots of the SAGM, later to become the Africa Evangelical Fellowship (AEF) were firmly established ‘in the lives, convictions and leadings’ of four devout ‘servants of God’”, adding Mr George Howe who is omitted by the others.

The name Cape General Mission could not be retained for long because the Mission’s sphere of influence had become broader than was originally envisaged. According to *Serving in Mission* Website, “After Martha Osborn married George Howe, they formed the South East Africa General Mission (SEAGM) in 1891. CGM and SEAGM merged in 1894, forming the South Africa General Mission. Because their ministry had spread into other African countries, they changed their name to Africa Evangelical Fellowship (AEF) in 1965.” Dhube (1997: 2) concurs and mentions that the name Cape General Mission was changed to South Africa General Mission (SAGM) and remained so until it was given the name Africa Evangelical Fellowship (AEF). As a result, the Mission’s name kept on changing several times, depending on its sphere of influence.

Although the Mission later became influential in a sphere much broader than Cape Town, even extending beyond the borders of South Africa, its original aim was centred in Cape Town and restricted to a small group of people. According to Kopp (2001: 1), “The Mission was established in 1889 in Cape Town to work among the European settlers coming into the country. In due time however, the mission work expanded as far north as Tanzania in the East and Gabon in the West. With such expansion, the Mission’s ministries inevitably developed among the Black groups resident in many of the countries in southern Africa, so much so, in fact, that ministries among the white groups essentially fell away.”

According to Beckett (1994: 24), the Cape General Mission started with the following being members of its first council:

President – Dr Andrew Murray

Director – Spencer Walton

Associate Director – Dudley Kidd

Honorary Secretaries – Mrs Martha Osborn and Mr George Howe

Treasurer – Mr P.G.H Wilmot

Council Members – Mrs Walton and Miss Ferguson.

It is noteworthy that, although the Mission was to be centred in Cape Town, the preparations had been put in place in a Council in London. According to Huntingford (1989: 9), "... in London on March 12<sup>th</sup>, 1889, the first meeting of the Mission Council was held with its 'principles and practices' formulated. Preparation for the departure of workers followed immediately, and soon the group comprising the first party was complete. It consisted of the Director, W. Spencer Walton and his wife, with Messrs Dudley Kidd, W. Malcomson, Michael Coates, A.E. Walker, and Daniel Jackson who was to undertake the work of the Railway Mission. The little band arrived in Cape Town in September, 1889, and very soon each was engaged in his particular work." The international flavour of the Mission is undeniable, right from its very beginnings.

In addition to the London Council, there was to be another Council in Cape Town. Huntingford (1989: 10) notes that, "... there was also a Council in Cape Town. This was composed of Dr Andrew Murray as President, Mr and Mrs Spencer Walton, Dudley Kidd, Mrs Osborn, George Howe, Miss Ferguson and P.G.H. Wilmot. The early work of the Cape General Mission was diversified and 'general' indeed."

While the purpose of this current study is not to give a profile of these founders, this work agrees with Kallam (1978: 34) that "To discover the beginning of the Africa Evangelical Fellowship, it is necessary to trace three lives as they joined together in working for the peoples of South Africa, which resulted in the founding of the Mission." The three lives referred to here are those of the three co-founders (Martha Osborn-Howe, Andrew Murray, and W. Spencer Walton) that have already been mentioned earlier on. We turn, therefore, to brief accounts of their lives.

#### **4.4.1.1 Andrew Murray**

Andrew Murray is undoubtedly a very significant figure in the establishment of the Mission in question. As Huntingford (1989: 8) indicates, "From the beginning Dr Andrew Murray was involved with Mrs Osborn and Mr Howe in their planning, and later

on with Mr Walton in the on-going work.” Andrew Murray was very active before, during, and after the formation of the Mission (Huntingford, 1989: 8).

Murray was born in South Africa in the Eastern Cape Province. Huntingford (1989: 8) points out that he was born at Graaff Reinet on 9 May 1828. The conversion of this very influential figure took place in 1845, according to Murray himself.

Andrew Murray was more than just a founder of a Mission. He can be said to have been a man of many talents. Fuller (2007) records, “... Andrew Murray (along with two colleagues) founded it (CGM) in 1889, and became its president. Son of a Scottish minister, Murray was already known for his Bible teaching (eventually published in some 250 books). He found a university, seminaries, and a missionary training institute. But he always considered missions as ‘the chief end of the church.’”

Murray is acknowledged by many as an outstanding figure in SAGM history. According to Shaw (2006: 204), “... Common to most missionary Christianity in nineteenth-century South Africa was an evangelical pietism that regarded personal religion as the heart of the matter’. No figure in South African history exemplifies this pietism better than Andrew Murray, Jr. (1828-1917). Though not a missionary himself, Murray was a great promoter of missions and helped to found the South Africa General Mission in 1894.” Dhube (1997: 2) calls Dr Andrew Murray “the most influential of the three”.

#### **4.4.1.2 Martha Osborne**

The only woman among the ‘co-founders’, Martha Osborn-Howe was definitely vital to this Mission in a number of ways. In fact, Dhube (1997) and Kallam (1978) are of the opinion that Martha should have been acknowledged much more than she has been. Dhube (1997: 1) argues, “... the South Africa General Mission was founded on the works of Mrs Martha Osborn-Howe. In that sense, she is the undisputed founder of the Mission – though that honour was not to be conferred on her in actual words.” For Kallam (1978: i-ii), “The Africa Evangelical Fellowship owes a great debt to Martha Osborn-Howe as a cofounder with Spencer Walton and Andrew Murray, a fact not fully acknowledged in the history of the Mission. The contributions of Dudley Kidd and Frank Huskisson to the growth of the Mission have also failed to get the recognition



they should receive.” Kopp (2001:17) likewise maintains, “SAGM ... owes its inception chiefly to a lady worker, Mrs Osborne”.

Like Andrew Murray, and unlike William Spencer Walton, Martha was born in South Africa. According to Dhube (1997: 1) “Martha Osborn-Howe (pronounced Hau) (was) a woman evangelist born Martha Storr at Sandfontein Farm near Uitenhage in the Port Elizabeth area, South Africa, in 1846, by father (a lawyer) Joseph Storr Lister who came from Yorkshire, England.” Huntingford (1989: 5) and Kallam (1978: 34-35) concur with the aforementioned information on the year and place of birth of Martha; the latter calls her “Martha Storr Osborne-Howe: The Initiator of the Mission”.

Martha grew up in a Christian family, which may explain her great interest in Christian work. Dhube (1997: 1) notes that Martha grew up attending meetings of the Plymouth Brethren with her family and that she married her first husband, a soldier, Captain Osborn of India. When Captain Osborn passed on in 1877, “she married the Rev George Howe – hence her two last names Osborn-Howe” (Dhube, 1997: 1).

After Martha was married, the couple moved to India where, after a while, Martha fell sick. Both husband and wife grew spiritually during this time. In 1874 they went to England on leave but due to her ill-health Martha could not return to India. Her husband died on June 16, 1877. She returned to South Africa in 1879 and worked with George B. Howe in a spiritual ministry for soldiers, involving herself in a number of evangelistic activities. After their visit to England (Howe went first and Mrs Osborn second), they both met with Rev Spencer Walton (a frequent speaker at the famous Keswick Convention). They asked Walton to visit South Africa (Kallam, 1978: 35-40).

To sum up Martha’s great work, Huntingford (1989: 6) asserts that, “Martha Osborn was indefatigable in her work for God...”.

#### **4.4.1.3 William Spencer Walton**

The only one of the three ‘co-founders’ who was born outside South Africa, W. Spencer Walton had a very fascinating background. He encountered difficult health challenges as he was growing up. He was born in London on 15 January 1850. His father sent him on a sea-trip to Australia in 1865, hoping that the sea-voyage would help his health

improve. Unfortunately, his father died while Spencer Walton was on the trip. He travelled on another voyage to South Africa in 1867 for 'health-reasons' again. At the age of 22, on 18 February 1872, he received Christ at an evangelistic meeting. For the next ten years he was involved in ministering the Word of God wherever he was invited, although he continued his secular employment. In 1882 he was included in the panel of speakers for the Keswick Convention where he met with Dr Andrew Murray for the first time. Within the same year he gave up his secular employment and joined the Church Parochial Mission as an evangelist. This he did until he resigned in 1884 so as to engage in a wider interdenominational ministry. In mid-1880 he was invited to conduct meetings for soldiers in Papillon's Soldiers' Institute, and this is interesting because one of the earliest thrusts of Mrs Osborn and Mr Howe was amongst troops in South Africa (Huntingford, 1989: 7).

Underlining the importance of Mr Howe, who has been mentioned earlier on, but who is not quite acknowledged in SAGM history, Dhube (1997: 2) mentions that, "William Spencer Walton (often simply, W. Spencer Walton) – a Baptist minister from England ... was recruited to come to South Africa by Mr and Mrs Osborn-Howe."

Spencer Walton was multi-talented. Dhube (1997: 2) records, "W. Spencer Walton was an outstanding preacher and a man of vision with a life marked by enthusiasm to serve God. Besides preaching, his other strengths were recruiting other workers for the Mission, raising interest in the Mission and support for the Mission, and pressing for expansion of the Mission at a time others in England felt the means were not available. But, sometimes his colleagues on the field in South Africa were at times at odds with him. He was the first director of the SAGM in Cape Town."

Kallam (1978: 41) remarks that, "Walton arrived in South Africa in 1888 for a series of meetings set up by Andrew Murray, Howe, and Mrs Osborn. By the end of these meetings, the plan for the Cape General Mission had been conceived in their minds". According to Kopp (2001: 18), "Following W Spencer Walton's second entry into South Africa, and with the help of co-founders Martha Osborn-Howe and Dr Andrew Murray, the Cape General Mission was launched in 1889". It is remarkable that the Mission started right from the very beginning with an 'international flavour' to it. This international flavour would remain with the Mission to date. Kopp (2001:39) adds, "Like other faith missions, SAGM/AEF became internationalized by virtue of the fact that the

USA, Canada, the United Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa provided both its missionary personnel and its support bases". Although the latter may be more relevant to missionary personnel at a later stage in the Mission, the fact remains that the Mission had an 'international element' to it right from its inception.

Although the Mission was initially meant to operate among the whites, Spencer Walton appears to have had a heart for the black workers as well. Huntingford (1989: 9) remarks that "Whilst in Kimberley, the plight of the African mine workers in the compounds was heavy on Walton's heart and he reported that 'having acquired the vices of so-called civilization, the workers return to their homes ten times more heathen than when they came to the mines.' It seems clear that sometime during his stay in Kimberley, Spencer Walton was sure that God was calling him to a life-work in the then Cape Colony."

In addition to the above, Glen (1959: 48) mentions that, "Mr and Mrs Spencer Walton pioneered the work in Swaziland in 1891. In 1894 ... work was opened up in Zululand, Tembuland, Pondoland, Bomvanaland (all three in the Eastern Cape), amongst the Indian people of Natal, the tribes of Gazaland, the Vanyanja of Nyasaland and as far North as the Kaonde tribe of Northern Rhodesia (now Zambia)". The once regional Mission had extended its boundaries in a very significant manner, reaching Zimbabwe as well where the SAGM missionaries were to influence and change the human landscape of Chimanimani. It is because of this expansion that we can talk of SAGM there.

#### **4.4.2 GEOGRAPHICAL EXPANSION OF THE MISSION**

Having started in Cape Town, the work of the Mission was not to be confined there. As mentioned earlier on, the Mission's influence was to be felt in other places in South Africa and outside the borders of South Africa as well. As Huntingford (1989: 13) puts it, "... The work increased tremendously in scope and geographical location and the number of workers increased correspondingly. The SAGM was now based in three centres: the original one in Cape Town, and Durban and Johannesburg." Beckett (1994: 28) concurs that, "The SAGM was based in three centres; Cape Town, Durban and Johannesburg, from where it spread into much of Southern Africa."

As already established, it is as a result of this growth within South Africa that it had to change its name from Cape General Mission to SAGM. Had it been envisaged at this point that the Mission was to travel across South African borders it would have been more appropriate to give it a name that did not seem to confine its operations to South Africa. I agree with Huntingford (1989: 13) that, "Hindsight has shown that it might have been wiser to have called the new Mission the Southern Africa General Mission: had this been the case, the mission might well have retained the name and not now be known as the Africa Evangelical Fellowship." This, however, was not the case and the Mission had to be renamed again after it had started operating in several countries in the region.

The change of the name was not simply that, 'a change of name', it was also a coming together of two Missions. According to Huntingford (1989: 12) the "... union of the two missions (the South East Africa Evangelistic Mission with Cape General Mission) was effected on January 1<sup>st</sup>, 1894, the two missions being united under the name, 'The South Africa General Mission'. Andrew Murray continued as President; for the time being Mr and Mrs Osborn-Howe continued as superintendents of the eastern part of the work, namely that based in Durban." Beckett (1994: 16) concurs with the aforementioned: "... the South Africa General Mission (SAGM) ... was officially established on January 1<sup>st</sup>, 1894 ... by an amalgamation of the Cape General Mission (CGM) and the South East Africa Evangelistic Mission (SEAEM)".

Without restricting itself to its original mandate, 'ministry among the whites', Dhube (1997: 4) mentions that, "Ministry to the indigenous peoples began in the compounds of Kimberley (northern Cape) and Johannesburg (Transvaal). From there, work was started among blacks in Swaziland, KwaZulu Natal, the Orange Free State and south Mozambique. And with the extension of British colonial rule northwards, missionaries of the SAGM also penetrated with freer access to Zimbabwe (then Southern Rhodesia), Malawi (then Nyasaland), Zambia (then Northern Rhodesia) and Angola." Implicitly mentioned here is the close connection between imperialism and/or colonialism and mission work.

The Mission's eschatology spurred it further and further. Kopp (2001: 21) notes that "Premillennialism has been a further distinguishing feature of the SAGM, more particularly of the American personnel entering its ranks. Such an eschatology

stressed the imminent return of Christ and, therefore, an urgency to proclaim the gospel to those who had not yet heard it". It appears as if these missionaries had a genuine zeal for the spread of God's word – something that cannot be taken away from them irrespective of how much criticism is levelled against them.

The Mission had a motto: "God First – Go Forward" (Kopp, 2001: 28). This, Kopp (2001: 28) declares, "...has been a long-time motto depicting both the intended theological basis and the practical thrust of the Mission and its ministries". Huntingford (1989: 4) adds that, "'God First' is the watch word of the Fellowship; 'Go Forward' is its motto, desire and intention, to whatever work, in whatever place, amongst whatsoever people God chooses to send." This is greatly evident in the SAGM missionaries that evangelised Chimanimani in Zimbabwe. Not even the unfavourable terrain of this region and the malaria bearing mosquitos could stand in their way. Later, there were to be fatalities due to these adverse conditions.

The Johannesburg office was instrumental in the sending of missionaries to Gazaland in Zimbabwe (then Southern Rhodesia) (Huntingford, 1989: 15). Precise dates of the expansion of the Mission in Southern Africa are given by Kopp (2001). According to him (2001: 33), "In 1897 ... the Mission moved its headquarters from Cape Town to Johannesburg, and the ministry of evangelism and church work continued to expand in Swaziland, Natal, and Zululand. Zimbabwe was entered in 1897, then Malawi (1900), Zambia (1910), Angola (1914), and Mozambique (1936)". Kopp (2001: 33) further reports that, "In the years that followed the name change (with reference here to a later change of name to Africa Evangelical Fellowship), the Mission continued to expand by establishing work in Mauritius (1969), Namibia and Reunion (1970), Botswana (1973), Gabon (1986), Madagascar (1987), and finally Tanzania (1989)".

Reasons for the second change of name are outlined by Dhube (1997: 49) who notes that, "The main reason behind the change of the name of the Mission from South Africa General Mission (SAGM) to Africa Evangelical Fellowship (AEF) and, with it, as was the case in Zimbabwe, the automatic change of the name of the Church from South Africa General Mission Church to Africa Evangelical Fellowship Church, was a growing feeling within the Mission that the words 'South Africa' were becoming too limited for the sphere of the Mission's activities (which now extended virtually over all of Southern and Central Africa and the Islands) and that with the rise of black nationalism the words

were beginning to cause political problems outside South Africa...". Procter (1965: 12) states that this change of name to 'Africa Evangelical Mission' took place at the International Conference held in South Africa in 1963.

Kopp (2001: 38-39) agrees with the aforementioned and summarises the developments as follows: "The SAGM/AEF was initially aimed at the Cape Province of South Africa as portrayed by its original name Cape General Mission. The later expanded aim of the Mission in southern Africa in general, including Angola, Zambia, Malawi, Mozambique and southwards, was reflected by the name South Africa General Mission. Eventually as the Mission expanded further northwards, and more and more countries gained independence from colonial rulers, the name was again changed to Africa Evangelical Fellowship to more accurately indicate its scope".

#### **4.4.3 THE TREK INTO ZIMBABWE**

Gazaland was a very broad term encompassing Ndaue territory in Zimbabwe and Ndaue territory in Mozambique (Portuguese East Africa). Melsetter District included what are called Chimanimani and Chipinge Districts today. The whole area was known as Gazaland or British Gazaland, to differentiate it from Portuguese (Mozambique) Gazaland. The name Gazaland had a lot to do with the Gaza Nguni of the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Dhube, 1997: 4). The history of the Gaza Nguni has been explored in Chapter 3.

The trek into Zimbabwe was not an easy one. The circumstances surrounding this trek were also not favourable. Beckett (1994: 31) records, "During the summer of 1896 the idea of establishing a mission station in Gazaland was proposed by Dudley Kidd ... Kid's 'vision for Gazaland' was shared by one of the men who was to accompany him into this territory, the engineer, Harry Raney."

Against all odds, Kidd and Raney forged ahead with their plan to evangelise Gazaland. Beckett (1994: 32) mentions that, "...the trek into Gazaland was formulated, a region partially controlled by the British South Africa (BSA) Company, the remaining area having been annexed by the Portuguese... The sense of urgency felt by Kidd and Raney concerning the need to commence evangelistic work in Gazaland, was not, however, shared by the British Council of the SAGM, and it would seem that the trek into Gazaland may have been undertaken against their will... The Council were of the

opinion that, if Gazaland were evangelised, it should be done by African evangelists. They believed that the missionaries should not expose themselves to the vicissitudes of an unhealthy climate, which, due to the prevalence of malaria, imposed a serious threat to most Europeans...”.

Three names stand out whenever the pioneers for this trek are mentioned – Harry Raney, John Coupland (Jack), and Dudley Kidd. According to Beckett (1994: 58), “In December, 1897, three pioneer missionaries, Raney, Coupland, and Kidd, embarked upon a mission into a potentially volatile human landscape, rumblings of the 1896/97 Shona/Ndebele rebellions against Imperial domination and subordination still shaking the unsettled ‘white’ community of Gazaland.” This suggests that the pioneers into Gazaland entered Zimbabwe at a very volatile period in Zimbabwe’s history but it is remarkable that even such documented facts of history could not deter or hamper the pioneers’ mission.

When we talk about missionaries today, we do not seem to do justice to the hardships they had to endure. It almost always seems as if they enjoyed very smooth transitions from their places of origin and as if they likewise ministered without any form of hardship. On the contrary, they suffered, and Fuller (2007) asserts that, “All the pioneers faced physical rigors, oppressive spiritual darkness, and violent opposition”. There was a great deal of walking involved and difficulties in moving luggage from one place to another, among other challenges.

King (1959) put together a book, *Missions in Southern Rhodesia*, based on the accounts of different missionaries in different Missions in Zimbabwe about the work of their own Missions. He (1959: 9) remarks that the book was the result of the work of many people and that he was simply a compiler who sent out circulars asking for contributions (from different Missions) and then to put the material together in the form of a book. He (1959: 9) submits that he made few if any alterations to the manuscripts submitted as he “wanted each Church to tell its own story”. King (1959:9) admits that, “As I have read these stories I have been impressed again at the cost in life and health of bringing the Gospel to Southern Rhodesia (Zimbabwe). Missionaries have died or watched loved ones die, stricken with fever and other diseases. Sometimes a start was made with work in a certain area but fever drove the Missionaries out. This sacrifice of life and health has not only been faced by European Missionaries, but also

by African Christians. From the time of Makhaza, the first African Christian in Rhodesia to die because he was a 'follower of the Book', to the present day African Christians – Ministers and Evangelists and their families and others – have faced dangers to health and strength to preach the Gospel to people settled in backward, unhealthy areas of the country”.

The accounts by Glen (1959) and Beckett (1994) are particularly important in my view because they were written by people who either were right on the ground in Gazaland or who had an opportunity to interview the missionaries on the ground. Reginald Glen was an SAGM missionary who responded to King's call (mentioned above) to submit an account of SAGM work in Gazaland. Beckett, on the other hand, is himself the son of another SAGM Missionary, Rev Haward Beckett, whom I had an opportunity to interview recently when I was in Zimbabwe from 18 April to 18 May 2016 conducting fieldwork for this current study. It is important to mention that the dissertation by Beckett (1994) was given to me by his father, Rev Haward Beckett, after I had interviewed him. It proved to be very significant in giving me perspectives of the SAGM missionaries themselves and the reflection of them by an SAGM missionary's son.

Along the same lines, Dhube (1997) is an account, of course not by a missionary or missionary's son but by the leader of the United Baptist Church, Dr Bishop Joshua Dhube, from the 1960s (transitional years) to around about 2008.

There was, indeed, a need for evangelisation in Chimanimani at the time the pioneers went in because, according to Kallam (1978: 180-181), at the time SAGM entered Gazaland it was relatively unevangelised.

The three pioneers left Johannesburg for Chimanimani in March 1897. They travelled by ship to Beira and by rail to Chimoio. From there they trekked in on foot with African carriers who deserted them, carrying off most of their food and equipment. They lost a lot of time in trying to recover these necessities and were physically very weak when they finally reached Dzingire, near the border with Portuguese East Africa (P.E.A.). The late Chief Dzingire, then a young man, was very averse to these strangers invading his country. However, they built huts and prepared for the rainy season. In November it was decided that John Coupland should stay with the remaining supplies while the other two returned to the railhead to obtain more. On reaching the railhead they decided that Mr Kidd should return to the headquarters to give a report, while



Raney returned to Coupland (Glen, 1958: 48, 49; Sinclair, 1971: 38; Procter, 1965: 18-19).

In the meantime, Raney found John Coupland very ill with malaria fever. The Humans and Moolmans, settlers in the area, were away at the time and Raney had no one to help him. As Raney sat down beside his colleague Coupland, distressed and discouraged, Coupland told him not to be troubled for it would be a promotion for Coupland if he were to die. He did pass away on November 14<sup>th</sup>, 1897, and Raney buried him the following day. Raney placed a stone on Coupland's grave on which he carved the one word, "Promoted" (from the conversation they had few days before) and the date (Glen, 1959: 49; Sinclair, 1971: 38; Beckett, 1994: 45; Kallam, 1978: 182-183; Procter, 1965: 18-19).

Procter (1965: 18-19) adds that Coupland was the first SAGM missionary to lay down his life for the evangelisation of the place at the border of Mozambique and Zimbabwe. He mentions that it is a miracle that Raney managed to survive as he struggled to build his house, being himself very weak.

Beckett (1994: 44-45) notes that, "With great sadness, Raney on November 11, 1897, wrote in his diary the following extract, 'Jack keeps very weak and ill... It's strange and neither I nor he can understand the Lord letting him get so bad, but we are just trusting we are in His hands and for ourselves neither of us would mind going home but it seems such a waste after all the trouble and expense of getting here, and there is so much to be done. The natives here don't even know the name of God. Sometime we'll understand.'"

There is implied here the SAGM missionaries' lack of appreciation for the religious life of the Ndaup people. It seems as if the pioneers set their feet in Gazaland with their minds fixed on teaching the Ndaup people and not seeking to understand the Ndaup people's ways of life. It cannot be true that the Ndaup people 'did not know the name of God'. As Procter (1965: 32) emphasises, "People are not necessarily 'inferior' because they are different. They have their own standards and, by failing to understand and observe them, we may offend the people we hope to influence with the Gospel message." The SAGM missionaries should have understood this about the Ndaup. They were different from the missionaries but this did not translate to inferiority or superiority in any way.

Dhube (1997: 12) records: “A testimony from Chief Kodzevhu Dzingire, father of Chief Dzawanda Dzingire and his brothers David, James, Petro, et al, ... He said years later: ‘With these hands, I helped bury the first missionary and I could never forget it. I’ve been a hard, stubborn man, but always in my heart was the thought that Christianity must be a great thing when a man was willing to die for the sake of telling it to others. Now that I have accepted Christ as my Saviour, I find that it truly is great.’” Glen (1959:50) concurs with the aforementioned.

Beckett (1994: 46-47) and Kallam (1978: 184) note that Kidd’s experiences in Gazaland led him to alter his position on healing and that during the period of his sickness, as a result of his sunstroke and malaria, he nearly died. Not knowing of Coupland’s illness and death, he struggled with extreme views on divine healing. This was not unique to him because Murray before them had also wrestled with some of these issues and had discussed them with Kidd. Kidd’s former position had been that the use of medicines revealed a lack of faith in God. He (Kidd) changed his view to one that it would be better to take medications while maintaining trust in God alone and that it would still be God who heals, though medicine was used.

According to Beckett (1994: 47), “Having reached this conclusion, he (Kidd) sent for a doctor, took medicine, and recovered. With some apparent sense of regret, he stated, ‘I feel personally that if Coupland had taken quinine, that he might still be with us.’”

It is important to note that these pioneers were young men who sacrificed their careers to go on the trek. Beckett (1994: 35) points out, “Harry Raney was twenty-eight years old when the trek into Gazaland was undertaken ... At the time he offered himself as a missionary to Gazaland, he was chief engineer of the Mayer and Charlton mines ... John Coupland was a mason ... Neither man, however, could boast of any prior training to prepare them for what lay ahead ...”. Dhube (1997: 4-5) mentions that Dudley Kidd was an able administrator from the founding of the Mission in 1889 and that Kidd used his abilities in the siting of Rusitu Mission in 1897. Of the three pioneers, the third was not committed to staying in Gazaland. According to Dhube (1997: 6), the actual volunteer pioneers among these three were Raney and Coupland. Kidd only accompanied them to select the spot for the first station and see them properly started.

This trek into Gazaland is one testimony to how the missionaries benefitted from imperialism. Beckett (1994: 40) notes that, “The Beira to Salisbury line, the route along

which Raney, Coupland and Kidd travelled through Portuguese Gazaland, was constructed during the early 1890s..." According to Beckett (1994: 41), "That Kidd had difficulty in hiring 'native carriers' ... further illustrates one of the 'many blessings' which the railway bestowed upon the imperial enterprise." The fact that the missionaries benefitted 'in a lot of ways' from the 'Imperial enterprise' will be revisited later in this chapter.

There is evidence of close relationships between the SAGM missionaries and the settlers and colonialists. In Beckett's words (1994: 42), "From New Umtali, Coupland and Kidd headed towards the home of Mr Martin, a friend of Andrew Murray. Raney was to join them, at Mr Martin's, a few days later. Here arrangements were made for temporary lodgings on the land of Mr Human, a settler farmer, until a site was secured for the mission station. Leaving Coupland upon Mr Human's land, which was situated in Rusitu, a region very close to Melsetter, Raney and Kidd returned with carriers to Massekessi." It was perhaps because of this close relationship between the missionaries and the settlers that the Ndaou found it difficult to distinguish between them as will be discussed under 'the attitude of the Ndaou people towards the missionaries' later on in this chapter.

Since Kidd had returned to the SAGM offices in Johannesburg, the task of finding a site for the Mission in Gazaland rested on Raney's shoulders. Raney was a fighter in many respects. Alone in Gazaland, Raney undertook, with extreme difficulty, the task of establishing a proper site for the mission station. Recorded in his diary are six periods of fever that sent him to bed, and twice what he called a breakdown, including mental confusion as a result of fever (Beckett, 1994: 47; Kallam, 1978: 184-185).

Glen (1959: 49) mentions that, "The Mission site was moved from Dzingire to Chingwekwe across the Rusitu River (Nyahode) which is the present site and called after the Rusitu River. The first site was under the paramount Chief Muusha who, with the sub chief, Dzingire, was very averse to the missionaries coming in and would not grant them any land on which to build. They obtained from Chief Ngorima permission to build in spite of the fact that he, too, was not in favour of their entry into his territory. He was heard to say, however, at one time, that, 'their medicine is more powerful than ours.'"

The relationships between chiefs and missionaries were not always cordial. Murphree (1969: 8) clarifies that, "Government policy stipulated that consent of a chief was necessary before any mission body could enter and work in the territory of his people. A number of chiefs refused this permission, some being openly hostile, while others simply delayed their answers indefinitely. These refusals were not, however, accepted as conclusive and where they were denied entrance the usual tactic of the missionaries was to acquire freehold property from the Company on land adjoining the reserves and establish missions there. They could thus work independently of tribal authority..."

Kallam (1978: 184 -185) reports that, "the new site at Chingwekwe was at a high elevation, had a good water supply, and was central to many kraals." Beckett (1994: 51-52) concurs and adds the new site was "far removed from the 'debilitative' heat and disease of low-lying Portuguese Gazaland ...". In other words, the new site was in a favourable locality. Raney (1899: 83), one of the missionaries at Chingwekwe or Rusitu in those early years, had this to say: "On March 17<sup>th</sup>, 1898, I first came to this place where our huts now stand, and though we had been about the mountain for two days, this at once seemed just the place that was wanted, – good altitude, open, and plenty of good water and wood. April 20<sup>th</sup> saw us pitching our tent for the first time on Singwequi [sic!] Mountain, having obtained permission to build here."

It is essential to insert here a few more quotes from Raney to bring to the fore his perceptions about the Ndaus and their cultural practices from late in the 19<sup>th</sup> century into the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

There was undeniable suspicion about each other between the SAGM missionaries and the Ndaus in Chimanimani. Raney (1898: 36-37) writes that, "We have been a good time here, and yet how little there seems done; the natives have not yet learnt to put much confidence in us, but still have the idea that we want to get something out of them, or, in some way or other, mean them ill. We hear of some places where the people long to be taught the Word of Life, but here their core idea is what they can get out of us in the way of limbo or salt, and they will beg for matches, cotton, needles, etc. Only yesterday I visited the chief, N'Garema, and though he was friendly and gave me milk, yet there still was suspicion on his part and he wanted to know if we were to take his land. But, praise God, the people are better than they were when I first pitched

my tent here; then the children fled in terror at my approach and the women got out of the way, and all the time seemed in fear; now the children come round here to play or ask to be allowed to grind for us, the mill being a novelty to them, and the women show much more confidence in coming to sell their grain and eggs, etc. But when I ask them to learn a Zulu hymn or chorus, or suggest any learning, they say they are afraid and don't want to, the evil spirits will harm them if they do; even those who live and work here with us say the same. And so we have just to live down their superstition, and the effects of ill treatment they have experienced at the hands of some whites, and therefore pray for grace to live the Christ life before them which must eventually tell. This will, perhaps, help our friends to pray for us in a definite way, for we need your prayers." This will be picked up later when this chapter discusses the missionaries' attitude towards the Ndaу people and vice versa.

Two years into the mission's existence at Rusitu in Chimanimani, Zimbabwe, Raney (1899: 84) expressed the desperate situation that the SAGM missionaries found themselves in, writing that, "As far as human eye can see, the natives are just where we found them, except that they have learned to know and have confidence in us. Only last week one of our work boys told me, while intoxicated (and they tell the truth then), that the people here say that if our teaching means giving up their beer, they want none of it, and would rather remain as they are. And then the Evil One says, what is the use of it all, what good have you done?" This shows that it was not easy to gain converts among the Ndaу because they did not want to give up their ways of life including beer drinking and, of course, other practices as well, with marriages being no exception.

The fact that SAGM missionaries had close relationships with settler colonialists and farmers has already been mentioned above and will be emphasised further as the chapter progresses. Raney (1899: 191) gives evidence of this, writing that: "So on our way to Umtali we stayed at Mr Martin's farm, and his son called the headman Sekuko and explained why we had come, and asked him to call his people for a service on the morrow (Sunday). Soon after breakfast on Sunday morning the natives began to arrive, and by the time we were ready we found the headman and 40 other men and boys, but no women. We had a good time, and the people were fairly attentive, but owing to Mr Martin, ... having to use Zulu in interpreting, some of it would only be partly understood; however, some of the men remarked that they had understood a

good deal of it, and said 'we have been only like monkeys before, we knew nothing.'" This relationship with white farmers, for example, seems to have helped SAGM in the evangelising efforts as exhibited here. What also stands out in the quote above is the fact that the missionaries appear to have succeeded to make the Ndaue people pity themselves and envy the ways of the white missionaries. This would be important in the SAGM missionaries convincing the Ndaue people to 'hate themselves' and mimic the missionaries in several different ways.

Writing in 1900, Raney (1900: 109) repeats a sentiment that he had written a year earlier. He observes that, "Once again it is time for the Annual Report, and as I sit and think over the past year and the work here it does not seem that there is very much that is encouraging to tell about. The people about us here remain apparently as they were, wanting nothing so much as to be left alone to continue in their evil way of laziness and drink. Some of them are very candid and say they are quite content to live in the same way that their fathers did, and want no change." This supports what has already been stated in this thesis, that making converts was something the missionaries struggled with in their different 'fields'.

Some few years later Raney wrote, in a way justifying the colonialists' existence in Zimbabwe (then Southern Rhodesia). It would appear that he was convinced that British rule had helped save the Ndaue people from the cruel raids of the Matabele and Shangaans. Raney (1903: 59-60) records that, "The Matabele and Shangaans spent a great part of their time raiding the smaller tribes surrounding them, carrying off their women and cattle, and butchering the men by hundreds. Close to our station is a wood in which many people took refuge during one of Gungunyana's raids and he surrounded the place, and killed them all; and even now, the women will never go there for firewood. Now the people build their huts and plough their gardens, and no one dare harm them because of this advent of British rule; they can, and do get justice, and any white man ill-treating them is promptly punished. The cruel raids are a thing of the past, much to the sorrow of the stronger tribes, and joy of the weaker. The native is now the most independent person in the world ..." It is such sentiments, among others, that would make it very difficult for the Ndaue to distinguish between the colonialists and the missionaries.

Ndau men were heavily criticised by Raney. He (1903: 60) asserts that: "The native is now the most independent person in the world; – his wives do most of the work in the fields and he has all the food he wants, and to spare. The agents from the mines come and ask him to go and work, guaranteeing him food and lodging, and from £2 to £3 per month; but very few will go. Money is nothing to them, and they prefer idleness and beer drinking here at home." Here again, Raney supported white settlers' ventures. It is clear that he would have loved to see Ndau men leaving in droves to work in white owned mines, which they were reluctant to do. Raney's remarks, to a considerable extent, made him of the same mind as either the colonial government or the white settlers. This relationship between missionaries and the other white people in Zimbabwe will be further explored later on in this chapter.

It has already been stated in this thesis that the SAGM missionaries lacked appreciation of the Ndau people and their ways of life. Raney (1903: 60) gives credence to this assertion when he mentions that "This people are as mean a race as one can imagine, bound by the sins of lying, idleness and drunkenness, and with little, or no natural affection even for their own flesh and blood. Gratitude seems to be an unknown quantity. And yet, this is the material we have to work upon, and these are the people among whom we are sure God has some chosen ones. Workers have been labouring here for nearly five years, and though we cannot yet point to one who has been born again, we know God is working, and we can see a difference in them. They know about God, they have often heard His Word, but as yet prefer to go their own evil way..." Raney represents sentiments shared by many other missionaries of his time. They evidently were too quick to judge the people they had come to evangelise. A close study of the Ndau would have shown that they had their own ways of showing gratitude, for example, compared to those that Raney was used to.

Apart from Raney and Kidd, more missionaries were to be involved in the work at Rusitu Mission, and later at Biriiri Mission (both in Chimanimani and under SAGM). Beckett (1994: 52-53) and Procter (1965: 18-19) mention Mr James Middlemiss and Mr A E Estall who arrived in Mutare (then Umtali) on June 16, 1898, to assist Raney in the mission work in Rusitu. Beckett (1994: 53) remarks, "In constructing the mission station in Gazaland, the SAGM missionaries were to have an enduring impact upon the physical landscape... Moreover, the site for the mission station was 'central to many kraals', a clear indication of the missionaries' desire to 'interact' with the Ndau

in an effort to 'Christianize' the human landscape. As such, they differed greatly from their 'non-Christian' contemporaries, the latter practising a policy of residential segregation from the 'natives'."

According to Kallam (1978: 185), James Middlemiss and A. E. Estall laboured faithfully, but with little visible result. Their greatest challenge was that they had not learned the Ndaub language, and they did not have an interpreter. However, they were convinced that God had placed them where they were, and they were content to stay. Zvobgo (1996:79) notes that Mr Douglas Wood joined Raney at Rusitu mission in 1900. In 1901 Mr Raney was invalided home to Cape Town. In 1902, however, he returned to Rusitu. In 1904 Mr J.E. Hatch arrived at the mission and in 1908 a boarding school was founded.

The suspicion about the white missionaries that has been mentioned by Raney above was also expressed by Estall. He (1898: 23) mentions that "Lately we have not seen so many natives about us as usual, as they are ploughing their gardens, and in consequence 'beer-drinks' 'are the order of the day, and it is difficult to get them to do any work for us. But we have been very pleased to see the freedom of the 'youngsters' come and play about the place; we do not want to discourage anything of this sort, as it means not only the breaking down of any fear or superstition which may exist, but the creating of a friendly confidence, which may be of great use when a school is started amongst them. We do not find, however, very much desire to learn amongst them as yet, but believe that this also will be created in their hearts in time." In this case, Estall shows appreciation of the fact that the youngsters at least were becoming more and more friendly to the missionaries. This is probably why missionaries in general would use the tactic of 'catching' the young ones first with their teachings (in schools and other places) with the aim of indirectly influencing the older people as well.

The language issue was always a barrier for the missionaries who had not learnt the local languages. The locals also found it difficult to express themselves to the missionaries that did not speak their language. To add to this, there was also a challenge in the fact that the two had different worldviews. This further confounded the situation. Estall (1899: 74), writing from Chingwekwe, Rusitu (which he calls Singwequi, Luciti Valley) in March 1899 mentions that "This morning we had a visit



from our friend the chief of the natives here, one of his names being N'Garema [misspelling for Ngorima]. We found it rather difficult to entertain our guest, not knowing his language nor fully understanding his customs. We offered him a chair to sit on, but he preferred *terra firma* and sat upon the floor of our hut. He is friendly toward us and brought us a small quantity of milk as a present, for which of course we had to give him something in return! We offered him a tin of meat, but he shook his head and said he did not want that, and his reason was – that coming all the way from England it would by this time be bad! But in the presence of such a needy soul, one feels how utterly transformation must be the work of God.”

The missionaries laboured for a long time at Rusitu without any converts to show for it. Douglas Wood can be said to have been God's blessing to the Mission at the time that he was at Rusitu. He was a most important influence at Rusitu, together with James Middlemiss and Estall. According to Dhube (1997: 13-14), “July, 1900, Raney joined Edgar Faithful in the just opened field of Malawi. Douglas Wood took his place at Rusitu. Later James Middlemiss was also transferred. Douglas Wood was a good language student. He and Estall began to communicate with the people in their own language. They were joined by a Zulu evangelist from Durban called Japheth. By Christmas Day, 1901, Wood reported for the first time that there were 120 men, women and children who attended a Christmas party at the Mission. Before he left for Johannesburg and eventually for England in 1907, he had translated the first Hymn 135: ‘*Jesu Wakandida*,’ into Chindau and had compiled a brief Ndaui grammar and dictionary. It was Douglas Wood who was nicknamed ‘*Mangwani iSondo*’ because every Saturday he made rounds in people's homes inviting them to church on Sunday.” Kallam (1978: 185-186) agrees with the aforementioned.

Beckett (1994: 82-83) likewise concurs, indicating that, “Raney was replaced by an able language student, Mr Douglas Wood. The latter, prior to his arrival in Gazaland, had spent some time in Zululand, occupied in an effort to develop a firm grasp of the Zulu language, as the framework of the ChiNdaui tongue is very similar to that of the Zulu, and a fair knowledge of the grammar of the latter is of great service. Wood spent the majority of his early days in Gazaland occupied with language work.” In December 1900, Wood initiated the translation of the Gospel of Mark into the Chindau dialect (Beckett, 1994: 84).

A few quotes from Douglas Wood will be inserted here to show what a major influence the man exerted on the SAGM work at Rusitu, Chimanmani.

First, Wood gives details about when and with who he embarked on the journey to Rusitu, Chimanmani. Wood (1900: 193) records, "... On June 30<sup>th</sup>, Mr Kidd, Faithfull, myself and Japheth, the Zulu interpreter for our station in Gazaland, bade farewell to our kind friends at Durban, with whom we had spent some happy days of fellowship, and embarked on board the *S.S. General*. At Delagoa Bay Mr Kidd went ashore to see the Swiss missionaries there, on his return bringing with him another native interpreter, who comes from our part and speaks the Chindoo [sic!] language, which is spoken by the people around us. The history of this native, Jonda by name, is one of the many proofs of the value of the evangelistic work done in the Johannesburg compounds. He walked to Johannesburg to work, and there came in touch with Mr Robert Wilson, who for some time had been working among the compounds...". The fact that Wood himself had learnt the Zulu language together with his taking interpreters with him shows that he had mastered the principle that one needed to speak the people's language in order to appeal to them.

This is evidenced in Wood's routines at Rusitu as shown in the following quote. Wood (1900: 226) recalls that "It is three months today since Mr Middlemiss and myself, with the interpreters, arrived at this station ... Life on the station has now got into working order ... The day begins with prayers in Zulu for the whole station, ourselves, interpreters, and any boys who may happen to be working here ... at 6am. Breakfast follows at 6.30, and our own united prayer and reading of the portion in English. For myself, the rest of the morning is taken up with the study in Shindao [misspelling for Chindau], with the interpreters, our present task being translating the Gospel of St. Mark into that language. Mr Middlemiss, Estall and myself have also started to study Zulu together, as the framework of the Shindao tongue is very similar to that of the Zulu, and a fair knowledge of the grammar of the latter is of great service." This preoccupation with the language is mentioned by several scholars to have helped the missionaries to make inroads among the Ndaus.

Another important thing that Wood did was to go out of the mission station to meet with the Ndaus in their homes and communities. This also helped bridge the gap between the Ndaus and the missionaries. Wood (1900: 226) writes that, "The

afternoons are spent visiting among the kraals, having a short meeting wherever a few people are found together. This past month, we have proved over and over again how God has led us to the very spots where large numbers of people were assembled, to dig up the ground and drink beer, the Gazaland 'garden parties'. If a man wants his garden dug up, he invites his neighbours to come and help him: in return for their labour he supplies the company with native beer, and gets a large piece of ground dug up in one day, many hands making light work." This quote brings to light another important aspect of the Ndaou people's way of life. They lived and worked communally. This aspect will be revisited in the research findings chapters.

Wood himself records the progress that he had made at Rusitu. He (1900: 226) mentions that, "It is about a month now since we broke the ice and began to speak to the people direct, using our Gaza interpreter when our limited stock of Shindao had been used up." This demonstrates that his language skills and the help of the interpreters made a major difference. However, he also admits that the Ndaou found it difficult to differentiate the missionaries and the interpreters from the settler colonialists and the police. About this, Wood (1900: 226) writes that, "It seems that we are often mistaken for the police, the Native Evangelist being dressed in European clothing as none of the other natives about here are, and that would account in great measure for the general helter-skelter that takes place, when we are beheld approaching."

The efforts of Wood and others were to be rewarded. Wood (1905: 251) remarks that "... at last the Word of God has begun to take effect, and the Prince of this world has been cast out from his hitherto undisputed sway over this people. As you know, there are now three from this part of the district that have confessed Christ, and this has caused real alarm and anger in the enemy's camp. They are two young men and a young girl, and it is the latter that has been the hardest blow to the Opposition ..." This will be discussed further below.

Labouring for years on end without any conversions was a common characteristic feature of most of these early missions as this thesis has already emphasised before. Having one convert was a sincere cause of celebration. According to Glen (1959: 49), the first one to accept the gospel was a boy named Chiwanguwangu. The second was Mutendi, a young girl who, when she believed, was tied and beaten by her father and brothers but when she did not relent, she was allowed to go and learn at the Mission.

She was married by Christian rites but died in childbirth. Her child, a girl, was brought up at the Mission as an orphan. According to Kallam (1978: 186-187), "...This (Mutendi's conversion) infuriated the Chief because the girl had been given as a wife to an elderly man in the tribe, but she refused to go because he had other wives and she was a Christian. There was nothing the chief could do because the Native Commissioner supported the missionaries' position." There is implicit mention of the close connections between the missionaries and the colonial government authorities here.

Wood (1905: 251-252) records this as follows: "... They are two young men and a young girl, and it is the latter that has been the hardest blow to the Opposition, for a girl is a marriageable article, and that means cattle, and when she wants to be a Christian, all the fond plans made for her when still an infant are upset, and there is friction and much heart-burning. This girl was promised to a man with wives and grown up sons, living long way away, and now that she has come out boldly, she will not have her ancient suitor, whom she has never seen, and so the chief is furious. He came to see me this morning, and was exceedingly glum, quite oppressively so ... They are waiting now for her elder brother to return, and then going to have another try to make her marry the man, as the brother, I believe, has already a wife given him by the expectant suitor, and should the bride not be forthcoming, then there will be complications ... awaiting him ... However, we have no fear, for we know that the law is on the side of any girl who wants to marry according to her own heart, and not according to the business arrangements made long before the white man came into the country." The relationship between the missionaries and the colonial government is further underlined here. They worked under the systems that were established by the colonial government and these systems were evidently appreciated by the missionaries.

Dhube (1997: 14) agrees with the aforementioned and notes that, "Towards the end of 1905, Douglas Wood finally reported a breakthrough in the effort to evangelize the Gazas. A girl and two young men had declared themselves to be Christian in 1902. The girl was Amutendi (Zvendinoereketa, shortened to and variously Mutendi and Murutendi), daughter of Chief Mushayanembeu Ngorima. The young men were Timothy Chiwanguwangu (a nickname) and his older brother Marijeki Chiuya

Dhliwayo. Closely following these were Mwathetha Samuel Nkomo (Sithole or Unzemwoyo), and Ruka Bwerudza, older brother of Rev Mackinase Bwerudza.”

Beckett (1994: 100-101) concurs, adding: “The SAGM pioneers were eventually to reap, following their arduous and protracted labour amongst the Ndaus, a ‘bountiful harvest’ of ‘native converts’”.

Apart from, and separate from, the ‘teething’ challenges, the mission in Gazaland was to meet with further difficulties. According to Kallam (1978: 187), in the last half of 1905 and in 1906, the future of the work in Gazaland was much in doubt. Wood, who had gained the best grasp of Chindau and had translated some of the New Testament into Ndaus, was moved to Johannesburg to work with the Executive Council of the Mission. In May, 1906, the British Council discussed the possibility of turning the work and the station over to another mission. It was felt that due to the limited personnel of SAGM, and the difficulties of the work, it would be better to concentrate efforts in other fields. John Hatch carried the work on during this time. In June, 1907, Hatch offered to resign because of the tenuous situation of the Mission in Gazaland and because of personal reasons. However, by this time, the ministry at Chingwekwe (Rusitu) was experiencing fresh blessing from God, seen in the growth of the school, and the conversion of a number of young men. The Mission made a new commitment to this work and Hatch stayed.

We have seen how the interpreters were influential in the evangelisation of the Ndaus in Chimanimani. Hatch (1905: 98-99) mentions the sad passing of Japheth due to malaria. Hatch (1907: 53), however, also reports that their numbers had been lately on the increase.

The trek into Zimbabwe included a well-calculated move to evangelise Mozambique as well although the Mozambique work failed. According to Procter (1965: 144) the pioneers set out for Gazaland (Rhodesia) to establish a bridge-head for the evangelisation of Mozambique which was described as “the largest unevangelised field in Africa south of the Equator” but the Chartered Company was adamant in refusing permission for the establishment of a permanent work.

#### **4.4.4 THE HOLY SPIRIT'S VISIT AT RUSITU (1915)**

In a spectacular fashion, the Holy Spirit is reported to have descended at Rusitu in 1915. According to Dhube (1997: 15), "Some ten years later after 1905, God, in the Third Person of the Trinity, the Holy Spirit, visited Rusitu on October 10, 1915." This is mentioned in this thesis because the event helped the Mission to gain more popularity. The impact of such a spectacular event was far-reaching and such was its influence as well.

The presence of the Howells at Rusitu seems to have greatly influenced this visitation. In 1910 Mr and Mrs G.E. Barnes arrived at Rusitu and in 1914 Mr and Mrs Howells arrived from England to join the staff (Zvobgo, 1996:79). According to Glen (1959: 50), "In 1914 Mr and Mrs Hatch, who had been labouring at Rusitu for several years, were joined by Mr and Mrs Rees Howells from England. It was at a time when the church was ready for revival. Many saved at that time stand true today and they in turn are being used to bring others to Christ."

The details about how the event happened are given by Rees Howells. He (1916: 130-131) reports that, "We arrived at Rusitu in August, 1915 ... we soon discovered that God, His Son Jesus, and the Holy Ghost were the same; and because they never change we could count on the same results in dark Africa as we witnessed in Wales. We went through the Welsh Revival and witnessed remarkable 'demonstrations of the Spirit.' We told the people about that revival (language was no hindrance as we have many interpreters), and we, the missionaries, agreed as to the conditions of revival, and were willing to comply with them: On the people's side the conditions were: 1. Confession of all known sin. 2. Full surrender to the will of God. Thursday evening, we (missionaries) not only prayed definitely for a revival, but had the assurance that the prayer was answered. Sunday evening, October 10<sup>th</sup>, the heavens opened. The Holy Spirit descended, and there was no room for the blessing. We witnessed the same results as in Wales. Rusitu was a transformed church, many young men had entered the 'School of Faith'. An Evangelist Class of about fifteen was started, and our boarding school was more than doubled."

Hatch (1916: 64-66) also details how the power of the Holy Spirit came upon Rusitu Church, writing that "The person upon whom the Holy Spirit first manifested Himself was a girl named Kufase ... No sooner had the Lord broken her down than the whole

church was moved.” Dhube (1997: 19) and Kallam (1978: 189) agree that the church at Rusitu experienced a great revival and that many young people (men and women) offered themselves as ‘evangelists’ and were deployed as ‘teacher-evangelists’ to preach and establish churches and schools in Chimanimani District.

The contribution of African evangelists is acknowledged by Zvobgo (1973: 68) who asserts that, “The missionaries also emphasized the importance of the African evangelist in carrying the gospel to his fellow Africans. In this they were being practical. They realized that they themselves were few and far between. If the gospel were to be carried into the village, a much larger staff was needed. This realization, first born of necessity, grew into a conviction that Africans were best fitted to carry the message to their fellow Africans.”

Some more quotes from primary sources are inserted here to substantiate the fact that this occurrence (the coming of the Holy Spirit) had a great impact on the SAGM missionaries’ work.

One of the missionaries of the time, Hatch and his wife, had recorded the event and commented on its impact. Kate Hatch (1918: 2) writes that, “They have been greatly blessed in the past days here at Rusitu, as those early disciples were at Jerusalem. Now God has called them to go forth to prove the reality of the joy and blessings they have had ... We ask your continued prayer interest for the work at Rusitu, that we may be a centre for spreading the light far and wide in this land. Pray for the evangelists as they go on tours, ‘that out of them may flow rivers of living water’... so that the whole land may be evangelised before the coming of our Lord.” Hatch (1917: 74) himself also attests to the great work that the evangelists did in witnessing to the communities within Zimbabwe and into Mozambique. In other words, therefore, as mentioned earlier, the visitation brought many converts, some of whom worked intensely as evangelists to bring their fellow Ndaue people to Christianity.

The Howells (Rees and Lizzie) played a vital role in the build up to the visitation of the Holy Spirit, during, and after it. As Lizzie H Howells (1917: 55) puts it, “After the awakening in Gazaland the great work is to establish the young converts in the Word of God and the knowledge of salvation. The revival brought two blessings, eternal life to the sinner, and the Holy Ghost to believers ... We need the prayers of our readers for ... (them) to be filled with the Holy Ghost from day to day that they may be a

blessing to their own people.” It is evident here that the SAGM missionaries intended to use the event and its publicity to help win more Ndaou converts.

As a result of the impact of the visitation, Rees Howells (1916: 131) reports the many converts who gave their lives to Christ when the missionaries and the evangelists went out for a twenty-four days’ evangelistic tour. He mentions that they all could see that the Spirit was convicting them. Hatch (1916: 111-112) attests to the great influence that the visitation of the Holy Spirit had. He mentions the issue of the young men who, as evangelists, went out to preach and the addition of over 110 to the number of converts who attended the missionaries’ regular preaching.

To add credence to the fact that the SAGM wanted the mission station at Rusitu to be known far and wide, H and R Raney (1904: 219-220), writing well before the Holy Spirit’s visit, record that “A man came up about a week ago with three ulcers on his leg. He injured it two years ago, and one sore is about two and half inches in diameter. The only covering he had on it was a thick piece of buck-skin. It is scarcely necessary to say what a state it was in when he arrived ... If these ulcers heal, no doubt the wonderful treatment of the ‘Teacher’ will spread far and wide ...”. The Holy Spirit’s visitation gave the missionaries and the mission station exactly this impetus.

With reference to a later occurrence, Dhube (1997: 18) notes, “Back home at Rusitu in the great influenza of 1918 which took many lives worldwide after World War 1, no one died at Rusitu. In fact, people found refuge at the Mission as they came to stay there and escape death which was wreaking havoc even in Chimanimani District.” God’s Spirit can be said to have significantly influenced and shaped events at Rusitu. In other words, the Holy Spirit’s power was manifest in numerous ways at Rusitu. It is important to note that all these occurrences were taking place in Ndaou territory that had been, before the advent of missionaries, under the influence of Ndaou traditional religion. Such great demonstrations of the power that Christianity wielded should have shifted the Ndaou’s perceptions in a tremendous way. It is in this sense, among others, that the missionaries can be said to have greatly influenced the Ndaou people’s beliefs and lifestyle.

In line with the above, Procter (1965: 145) asserts that, “Although somewhat restricted territorially by the presence of other Missions in that part of Rhodesia, the station at



Rusitu became a centre for Gospel witness in and around the Reserve where the station was located on a narrow ridge ...”

#### **4.4.5 LATER YEARS IN THE MISSION/THE CHURCH**

The missionaries, apart from evangelising, also established a Central Primary School at Rusitu, a Teacher Training School at Biriiri (1956), outschools, medical work at Rusitu, an orphanage (founded in March 1921; but it closed down in 1957 due to lack of funding) and a Bible College (both at Rusitu) (Glen, 1959:50; Dhube, 1997: 21).

Much of the history of the later years of the Mission and of the Church (UBC) can be gleaned from Dhube (1997). As already established, more and more missionaries were to be involved in Mission work both at Rusitu and at Biriiri (the two SAGM stations in Chimanimani). According to Dhube (1997: 22), “Among the missionaries of these two decades who were involved in the orphanage were: Rev and Mrs Hatch, Miss Alma Gahm, Miss Lilian Taylor ..., Miss Elmina Doner, Mbuya Katie Allen (later Mrs Legg...), and Rev and Mrs Reginald Glen... Others at the Mission were the McGills and their daughter Jessie and Miss Chapman, the first missionary nurse in the clinic as well as Mrs Margaret Evans, wife of Rev David Evans, when the orphanage was closed.”

The two mission stations (Rusitu and Biriiri) have remained standing to this day. Dhube (1997: 35) points out that “Rev Smith, together with Rev Merritt the Principal, was the builder of Biriiri Mission – first as a teacher training college from 1956 to 1964 when it was gradually turned into a secondary school. Rev Smith did all the older stone work at Biriiri and designed the outlook of the Mission. He was later to be joined by Rev Roy Davey also from Rusitu who was also a construction man and a mechanic.”

As mentioned in the foregoing discussion, the autonomy of the church was not an event but rather a process. As Dhube (1997: 45) recalls, “Before this period of thirty years ended (1930-1960), the seeds of church autonomy which were to reach their full blossom in the 1970s were sown in earnest. The Mission now wanted the Church to learn to support the work itself and move away from giving the penny which had been generally the norm till now.... Meanwhile, the Church began wondering as to why the Mission was trying to leave the Church to carry its work alone when the Mission and

the Church were supposed to be one thing – the church. The Church waged an all-out struggle against the Mission to have one constitution and one name. But the Mission replied that that was impossible as the Mission was interdenominational and international whereas the Church was indigenous with no “mother” Church overseas as was the case with other denominational Missions such as Anglicans, Methodists, Presbyterians, Dutch Reformed and even Baptists which the Rusitu Church was even not at that time. After the Church insisted to become one thing, the Mission gave the Church a constitution which was in the main the Mission’s constitution. It was the Constitution of the South Africa General Mission, with ‘church’ added at the end to read Constitution of the South Africa General Mission Church.”

For Dhube (1997: 45-46), “The leading players in this saga were, on the Mission side, the Reverends Glen, Merritt and Evans, as this was after Rev Dotson left Rusitu on the baptism issue (which he wanted nothing but immersion and disagreed with his fellow missionaries).”

Between 1930 and the 1960s the missionaries’ work was both consolidated and expanded to cover more of the pockets that had been left untouched so far. Hatch, one of the longest-serving SAGM missionaries, exited in 1930 and a new generation of missionaries came in. These were led by Rev Clyde Dotson and were to take the work to new heights. “Outstation” churches opened by the evangelists also began to grow in membership. Secular education was upgraded at those stations – from Standard I, II and III, until they reached the level where they could offer Standards IV to VI (for example, at Mhakwe) (Dhube, 1997: 34). The growth of the outstation churches can be argued to have been an element that encouraged the black members of this church to believe that they could take this Church further themselves.

Dhube (1997: 37) adds, “Meanwhile, again, at Rusitu Mission, boarding facilities for, at first, Sub A through Standard VI and, later, Standard IV to VI only, after Sub A to Standard III moved to Hode School in 1948, were teaming with boys and girls – indeed, the heyday of missionary activity which saw many more missionaries coming to the field in a way never seen before.” It should be noted that schools were an effective means in which the missionaries could impact on the lives of children (Ndau children included) and change them before they became older, and possibly somewhat inflexible.

Other missionaries of this time, among others, included Rev and Mrs Ernest Barnes, Misses Jenks and Lilian Taylor (the first Principal of Rusitu Primary School up to Standard VI), Rev and Mrs Judson Merritt (the intellectual who opened Biriiri Teacher Training College in 1956), and Rev and Mrs David P. Evans (who came in 1949). Mr Evans became the first Rusitu Bible School Principal from its beginning in 1953 with one student, John Semwayo, who was to be joined in his second year in 1954 by Simon Mundeta from the American Board Mission of Chikore and Joshua Dhube. Still another missionary couple were Rev and Mrs Edward W (E.W.) Smith, who was nicknamed “Kupupira” from the chorus “It’s bubbling in my heart” he taught and translated into ChiNdaу together with his friend Evangelist Reuben Magaa Mutisi while still at Rusitu (Dhube, 1997: 35, Procter, 1965: 125). Procter (1965: 125) records, “The Rusitu Bible Institute in Rhodesia was opened in 1950 by the Rev. David P. Evans with a ‘student body’ of one! In 1963 there were twenty-one day students and five evening class students, while the staff has been increased by the addition of the African pastor, Mr Makinase Bgwerudza, and Messrs. Gordon Crofts and Haward Beckett.” The latter, Rev Haward Beckett, now an old man, lives in Harare, Zimbabwe, today and I had the privilege of interviewing him for this study as has already been stated earlier.

Although the number of converts increased with time, the converts themselves faced many challenges. Major issues concerned how they were to relate to their fellow unconverted Ndaу people and how they were to relate to their culture and tradition. As Beckett (1994: 108) points out, “... ‘converted’ Ndaу were sorely persecuted by their contemporaries (example of Mutendi), especially their immediate family.” Beckett (1994: 109) adds that, “Ndaу converts were ‘othered’, ‘alienated’ from their community, yet impelled to comply with cultural norms, customs, values. Great was the sacrifice, therefore, borne by many ‘natives’, upon the adoption of Christianity, forsaking an age-old way of life for something they perceived to be of far greater value.” In some cases, however, as in the issue of marriage, the Ndaу converts continued to practise their Ndaу ways of being married while at the same time practising “church marriage” (weddings) as well. This has remained a challenge that this thesis seeks to address.

In order to shield their converts from ‘pagan’ influences, as has been indicated, some missionary societies established Christian villages on their mission stations (Zvobgo, 1996:127). The SAGM missionaries used their two stations to influence the Ndaу

communities around them. Except for the boarding school children and people who sought shelter at the mission during the influenza, it seems as if the Christian villages were not part of the SAGM missionaries' *modus operandi*.

All the Christian churches in Zimbabwe laid down rules and regulations governing church membership (Zvobgo, 1996:319). These were described earlier.

In the SAGM, as has been mentioned adultery and polygamy comprised some of the chief grounds of severance from the Church (Zvobgo, 1996:322). Sadly, this rigidity also extended to marriage practices.

What is common with most of the missionary groups, as has been mentioned earlier on, is the fact that they built schools, hospitals, training centres, and churches and worked through these and others to infiltrate and change the lives of the indigenous Zimbabwean people. The cultures of the different people groups in Zimbabwe were not spared. These were strongly challenged: most of, if not all, that was African, initially being considered to be evil and or unchristian, among other negative terms.

The lives of the people in Zimbabwe were changed tremendously with the result that most Zimbabweans today no longer practise most of what belonged to their own cultures. The missionaries, however, failed to erase from history a practice such as *roora*. It has continued to stand to date irrespective of the harsh criticism that has been levelled against it. It is for this reason that the question arises of why people who are married according to custom should also marry in church (have a 'Christian' wedding as perceived in Western terms) before they can be considered married. Though this work confines its research and its findings to the Chimanimani area of Zimbabwe, among the Ndau people, it should be emphasised that wherever the missionaries were involved in Zimbabwe, such a question equally applies there as well.

SAGM autonomously ministered in the Ndau area of Chimanimani for a long time and its influence in the area cannot be underestimated. To date the church that was born out of this Mission in Chimanimani, Zimbabwe, maintains a significant stronghold in Chimanimani District although other churches are also present.

#### **4.4.6 UNITED BAPTIST CHURCH (UBC)**

Joshua Dhube was the Bishop and Church Chairman of the United Baptist Church of Zimbabwe (UBC) for decades from the late 1960s to around 2008.

The phenomenon of SAGM founded churches gaining autonomy was not unique to Zimbabwe. According to Huntingford (1989: 20), “Nationalism was to become a powerful force and, one after another, countries under colonial rule were to become independent political entities. In the late 1950’s discussions were begun which were to lead to independence from the Mission and autonomy being both recommended and offered to the various church groups associated with the SAGM in the different countries of the field.” As a result of many discussions and negotiations about church autonomy, the SAGM was to allow the Mission-founded ministries to function under black ministers. Several churches, under different names, were born out of the SAGM in different countries (Kopp, 2001: 60). The same happened in South Africa and in Swaziland, for example.

A layman, Mr Time Zabanyana Dube, led the Church now called UBC at a time when there were no clergy to lead it through the difficult 1960s into the early 1970s when Joshua Dhube (now Dr Bishop Joshua Dhube) was studying in Swaziland and the United States of America. Joshua Dhube returned in 1971 and resumed the chairmanship in 1972. Zabanyana, who died at Biriiri in 1976, was the only layman to have led this church. In 1969, during Zabanyana’s time, the Church adopted the Africa Evangelical (Fellowship) Church constitution but that constitution was superseded at Joshua’s return by the present United Baptist Church Constitution (Dhube, 1997: 48). Without knowing how much was different in these two constitutions, it is clear, as has been indicated, that the Church’s stance on Ndaу marriages has never altered from the missionaries’ time to date.

The missionaries and the indigenous Ndaу Christians in Chimanimani, as established, did not agree ‘overnight’ or ‘over dinner’ to let the church be autonomous. Dhube (1997: 49) records: “The years of dispute between the church and the mission over becoming one entity stretched over a period of about 20 years – from the mid-1950s to the first half of the 1970s. This period, which was to end with the Church adopting a new United Baptist Church, UBC (formally, The Association of United Baptist

Churches of Zimbabwe) Constitution in 1973, saw three name changes of the Mission and the Church.”

The church had to change its name after parting with the Mission for the reasons that follow. According to Dhube (1997: 50) the leading argument for a further name change for the Church was because the Church could not continue to change its name whenever the Mission changed its name. The church needed a name independent of the influence of the Mission because the former had the desire to become completely Baptist. As Dhube (1997: 50) expresses it, “The desire to continue in partnership with the Mission was strong, just as it has remained to be so today. We were ‘born’ by a Mission ‘parent’ body; how could we change that history.” It should be mentioned that although UBC and AEF (now Serving in Mission) parted ways, the two have continued to be in partnership, with the latter supporting different projects that are run by UBC.

Dhube (1997: 56) mentions 1974 as “the first full year of UBC as an autonomous Church ...”. It is important to follow this closely as has been done here because one needs to understand that, even after autonomy was achieved, UBC never reconsidered its position on ‘marriage’. The position that was arrived at under the missionaries remains the church position today.

The church has continued to thrive to date. According to Dhube (1997: 57), “Only the war years from 1975 to 1979 were to be a disrupting factor in seeing the rejuvenated Church thrive to full bloom. But all was God’s ‘order’. And after the war was over, contrary to all human fears of never seeing the church thrive again, what was a parochial church confined to Chimanimani District in the main with a handful of workers became a nationwide church with an ever increasing number of workers...”

#### **4.4.7 SERVING IN MISSION (SIM)**

The SAGM/AEF lives on but now under the name Serving in Mission (SIM). Consequently the Church that was born out of this Mission in Zimbabwe is now known as the United Baptist Church of Zimbabwe while the Mission itself is now called SIM.

Fuller (2007) and Kopp (2001: 2) note that Africa Evangelical Fellowship (AEF) (formerly SAGM) merged with SIM (Society for International Ministries, formerly Sudan Interior Mission) on 1 October 1998.

The *SIM website* asserts that “A union of several organizations founded over 100 years ago, SIM works today with the same passion as its founders”. This source adds that, “In the 1980s, Andes Evangelical Mission (AEM), International Christian Fellowship (ICF), and Soudan Interior Mission (SIM) joined forces to become SIM, which then stood for the ‘Society for International Ministries.’ AEF joined with SIM in 1998. In 2000, SIM adopted the trade name (or slogan) ‘Serving In Mission,’ for English-speaking countries, but our official name around the world today is simply SIM.”

#### **4.5 SAGM MISSIONARIES’ ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE NDAU AND THEIR CULTURE**

As has been mentioned earlier on, the SAGM missionaries were not willing to learn from the Ndaus when they arrived in Gazaland. The very reason that they did not know the people’s language but nevertheless expected to make converts speaks volumes about their attitude towards the Ndaus. They wanted to win the Ndaus to Christ but did not want to learn from them.

The missionaries were unapologetically intolerant of ways of life that stood opposed to their own ones. Shaw (2006: 275) points out, “The missionary is accused of cultural imperialism and intolerance because of the uncompromising emphasis on the supremacy of Christ, an emphasis that seems somewhat arrogant and intolerant at the present time when the value of other third world cultures and religions is being rediscovered. The history of missions in Africa is full of cultural insensitivity, petty denominational rivalry, arrogant attitudes, and unfair attacks against African tradition.”

The missionaries did not understand polygamy in context. They used Western lenses to view polygamy, which was an African solution to African problems. According to Hatendi (1973:138-9), polygamy is a social solution to social problems. The missionaries should have sought to understand the phenomenon first before seeking

to uproot it. The same can be said of most of what they opposed in their different working areas.

Missionaries condemned polygamy on the grounds, inter alia, that it was the cause of jealousy and hatred in the family (Zvobgo, 1996:106). The former failed utterly to appreciate fully the values of the cultures of the African people of Zimbabwe whom they came to evangelise (Zvobgo, 1996:112).

Some quotes from primary sources will be utilised here to substantiate the claims made above.

Missionaries mistakenly perceived bridewealth payment to have been a simple 'selling' of girls and women. Hatch (1907: 98) exemplifies this when he states that "The way a heathen man treats the women and girls of his family or kraal has doubtless been the cause of innumerable wrongs and quarrels ... the missionaries' task of teaching ... that a woman is more than an ox or goat is one of the most difficult he has. That they are not to steal, or murder, or commit adultery, they all readily accept, but why a man should not sell his daughter or sister, or exchange her for a wife, is beyond their comprehension. She belongs to him. Her value is £20 or £25, if the daughter of a chief. She is worth five or six head of cattle, and why the cattle should not be obtained, even if the girl is sold to some old polygamist, is more than they can comprehend. The idea of asking her whether she approves or not never enters their heads until they are brought up against the law. She is an article of trade from her birth, and even before she is old enough to walk, may be already the property of her husband. She may be mortgaged, money being obtained on her, or she may be the surety for a debt." Hatch however also mentions a valid point that a postcolonial hybrid setting would advocate for – respect for the opinion of the girl. Suppressing the feelings and/or choice of the girls or women would not be sustainable in a postcolonial hybrid setting.

There is evidence of the fact that the missionaries wanted to abolish *roora*. Hatch (1907: 99) emphasises that "Our standard has been made clear, however, that no Christian is to receive money for his children or sisters, and this rule will be strictly enforced." This, however, did not succeed. This is proof that the Ndaou people did not passively accede to the teachings of the SAGM missionaries. They maintained what they could and reinterpreted some Ndaou cultural practices to fit the new hybrid context.



With reference to *kutemaugariri*, Hatch (1907: 99) asserts that, “Another evil custom in practice here is the giving of young men wives free of cost, and thereby making them servants for life. All their female offspring belong to the owner of the girl, and they in turn can be given away to others on the same conditions ... The young man then dares not go against the wishes of his master lest his home and family be broken up and he left alone.” Although this practice helped solve social problems among the Ndaou, the missionaries failed to view it in context. It helped men who would not otherwise have been able to marry to obtain wives for themselves.

The above few examples simply serve to accentuate the fact that the missionaries in general, and the SAGM missionaries in particular, did not give themselves time to understand the people they were evangelising. They also did not seek to understand why the Ndaou did the things that they did, for example, marrying many wives, paying *roora*, among others. In the words of Beckett (1994: 70), “... contextualisation ... was largely absent from pioneer missionary methods. The SAGM missionaries appear to have categorised the Ndaou culture as one homogeneous whole, each constituent unit essentially reinforcing and exacerbating the totality of ‘heathen’ depravity.”

The attitude of the missionaries to Ndaou culture seems to have been driven more by their worldview other than anything else. Although the missionaries presented a rigid view of ‘Christian’ marriage, it is baffling to find that the Bible itself does not present a ‘homogeneous’ view of marriage. One may actually speak of the ‘Biblical understandings of marriage’. As Thatcher (1999: 67) makes clear “... there is a bewildering diversity of views about the meaning of marriage in the Bible which may not be readily harmonized ...”. In other words, the missionaries’ rigid stance on marriage did not have any backing from Scripture. The rigidity was a ‘defence’ of their own understanding.

According to Dachs (1973: 54), “It was from the missionaries’ understanding of a sinful world that the first practical difficulty arose. For in much of African society European missionaries of the nineteenth century were ready to find sin.”

As indicated earlier, the SAGM missionaries omitted the very important aspect of learning a people’s language first before seeking to evangelise them. Before Douglas Wood’s time the missionaries simply sought to impact on the lives of the Ndaou people without learning their language. Yet, according to Smith (1926: 37), “The missionary

must be thoroughly at home in the language of the people and be acquainted with their mentality and manner of life". Smith (1926: 39) adds that, "In philosophy, as in evangelism, we must begin with man [sic] as he is – with men as we find them. The African ... comes into the world with innate tendencies derived from distant forbears, human and subhuman...". The SAGM missionaries also ignored this principle of starting with what the Ndaou had so as to introduce them to the 'new'.

Missionaries in most cases sought to isolate the Ndaou from their social contexts. They wanted them to behave like Westerners and to ditch their identity and culture. The Ndaou did not exist as an isolated individual; he or she was a member of a group. He/she was born into a family, a clan or tribe, into a language and a traditional system of custom and belief. The African's social milieu differs from a European's (Smith, 1926: 39). The simple fact that one social heritage differs from the other does not mean that either of the two is wrong.

The missionaries in a sense could have used a completely different approach with different results. As Smith (1926: 40) emphasises, "Indiscriminate denunciation of African customs in preaching is merely mischievous – and foolish... Christianity comes to Africans with greater power when it is shown to be not destructive but a fulfilment of the highest aspirations which they have tried to express in their beliefs and rites."

It is supposed to be fully possible to embrace Christianity and yet remain fully Ndaou. Smith (1926: 41) asserts that, "It is not necessary for the African to become denationalized in order to become a disciple of Christ..." adding (1926: 48) that, "The acceptance by Africans of Christianity does not mean – at least, it ought not mean - that they cease to be Africans." Hatendi (1973: 146) notes that, "For the missionary 'conversion' means turning away from Shona culture and accepting the Western way of life. Faith in Jesus as Saviour comes last." This is the crux of the marriage issue that this study addresses. The Ndaou did not necessarily have to conduct a Western marriage in order to be considered Christian or to be said to have been married by Christian rites.

The missionaries failed to appreciate the culture of the African, among other areas of an African's life. Contrary to the missionaries' accounts, Hassing (1960: 259) submits that, "The African whom the missionaries found on arrival in Southern Rhodesia, was by no means without education. Within his [sic] own system the adult African was an

educated person with his own folklore and tradition, his own system of law sanctioned by his religious ideas, his totem system and his taboos. The African kinship system was so complicated that it took a long time for the European intruder to understand it, and the African had a wide knowledge of the natural world ... The African's insight into human life was deep, and his infinite number of proverbs revealed a profound human understanding." In other words, had the missionaries used a different set of lenses, they would have appreciated much of what they denigrated about African cultures. This is true at a broader level and at the level of SAGM missionaries in particular.

The SAGM missionaries, sadly, perceived themselves as far superior to the Ndaus they had come to evangelise. The Ndaus, for these missionaries, had to be rescued from their evil environment and from themselves, lest they self-destruct. According to Beckett (1994: 60), "Raney, Coupland, and Kidd, in accordance with this passage of scripture (Ephesians 6: 10-14), visualised themselves as soldiers enrolled in the 'Army of God', forcefully engaged in a titanic 'spiritual' battle against the 'Kingdom of Darkness'. These unseen forces of evil, covertly manifesting themselves through 'sin, superstition, and indifference' within the 'Native' population, seemingly resulted in 'a mass of human life where God is not known and where darkness, hopelessness, and death reign supreme...'. Beckett (1994: 60) adds that, "The souls of the Ndaus were seen to be held captive in a dark 'satanic thralldom', the devil disputing, 'every inch of ground ... determined that none of his captives shall be set free, without a great struggle'...". The SAGM missionaries' attitude towards the Ndaus was in tandem with the attitudes of the other missionaries, their contemporaries. Bhebe (1979: 111) asserts that, "...all the missionaries saw themselves as fighting Satan in his own kingdom."

Several quotes from primary sources will be presented here to support the fact that the SAGM missionaries regarded themselves as God's instruments to save Ndaus from darkness and hopelessness.

In 1898, Estall (1898: 23) writes, "More and more the intense need of the surrounding heathen has been laid upon our hearts; but the tremendous darkness and power of the devil and his hosts around us, we are unable to measure. Being, as we are, right among the ranks of the enemy, the Lord's promise to us is, "... Behold I have given you authority ... over all the power of the enemy." Luke x. 19, R. V."

The Ndaou were not thought to be only heathens but to be people of a low class as well. Estall (1898: 24) gives evidence of this when he claims that: "Not only do the natives seem to be of the lowest type, socially and morally, but utterly without any mind regarding the Supreme Being. Some African tribes are known to have a practice of worshipping fetishes, but even this seems totally above these people here. Still, though they may not want you to bring Christ to them, they none the less need Him, and that need is a cry, and that cry, which comes to you and me, ascends to God, as did the cry of Israel in Egypt under the oppression of their taskmasters. And in response, the Lord said to Moses (Acts vii. 34): 'Come now, let me send thee to Egypt ... that thou mayest bring forth my people' (Exodus iii. 10). 'Behold to obey is better than sacrifice.'"

In addition, Raney (1898: 36), writing within the same year as Estall, describes the situation as follows: "... but the lonely worker surrounded by the blank darkness of heathendom, where Satan's power is realized as nowhere else, where so much seems to retard and so little to help forward, writing on the spot just as things are ... from Gazaland, for we have been realizing that we 'dwell where Satan's seat is,' not so much from outward circumstances, as just in the quiet of our own inner life, and were not our feet planted upon the Rock, we should fail. But, praise the Lord, He is true to His promise, 'Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world' (and Gazaland is not that far), and so long as we have Jesus Himself abiding with us, Satan may rage, but thereby only reminds us the more of our weakness, and makes us cling closer to the Rock."

Another SAGM missionary, Middlemiss, shared the same sentiments as the other SAGM missionaries, alluding (1899: 6) to "... the spirit of faith in which we have been enabled to go into the enemy's camp in the Name of our Lord, who said, 'Now the ruler of this world shall be cast forth outside,' John 12.31." He (1899: 6) also prays, "... Oh Lord, do grant us that of Thee to live in us, that shall speak of Thee to the heathen (with whom we come in contact and those who only hear of us); directing the thoughts of their hearts to Thee, that they too may be brought to know Thee, as we know Thee ...".

Wood, likewise, shared the same perception. He (1902: 15) writes that "The fight here against sin, superstitions and indifference waves fiercer and yet more fierce as the

days pass by, ... The devil disputes every inch of the ground, and is determined that none of his captives shall be set free, without a great struggle.”

Writing much later in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Beckett (1994: 61) comments that, “The missionaries saw themselves as ambassadors of this ‘Good News’ of salvation. They were ‘lights’, shining in the obscuring ‘blackness’ of heathen ignorance’...”. This attitude affected their work on the ground. They approached the Ndaus as people that had a culture that needed to be purged – ignoring, in the process, the good aspects of Ndau culture.

In line with the above, Beckett (1994: 61-62) adds, “The pioneer missionaries of the South Africa General Mission were to regard the culture and customs of the Ndaus in a characteristically scathing manner. There were numerous Native traditions to which the missionaries were directly opposed, viewing the occurrence of these practices as a ‘big wheel in the devil’s kingdom’”. (For example, Raney saw beer drinking in large quantities as having the same effect as spirits.)

The Ndaus needed rescuing in a great many different ways according to the SAGM missionaries, for example, spiritually, physically, and mentally. Beckett (1994: 63) remarks that “The Ndaus were seen to be ‘utterly without any mind regarding the Supreme Being’... The SAGM missionaries considered the Ndaus to be ‘trapped’ within a world of fear and uncertainty, seemingly at the mercy of their patrilineal ancestral spirits, the ‘charlatan’ witchdoctors, and the malevolent witches or ‘*varoyi*’.”

The physical rescue related to newly-born babies who were killed unnecessarily. The Ndaus believed it was taboo to allow twin babies and children whose upper teeth appeared before the lower to live (Beckett, 1994: 65-66). Wood (1903: 200) also attests to this when he records that “Twins among his people are expected to be put to death, at birth – as also the child who cuts his top teeth first.” Both these were believed to be bad omens. The Ndaus, therefore, needed rescue from such practices.

As mentioned earlier, their minds also needed some “rescue” of some sort. Beckett (1994: 66-67) remarks that “John E. Hatch (an SAGM missionary) accused the Ndaus of possessing ‘reprobate mind which leads to murder’. The term ‘reprobate’, an ‘unprincipled’ and immoral person, confirms and augments the European concept of

the 'other' – 'backward', 'savage', 'heathen', 'inferior', justifying missionary presence in Gazaland, yet not lauding the inherent 'virtues' of Western civilisation."

In line with the aforementioned, Idowu (1973a: 426) states that, "'Savage' stands at the opposite end of the pole from 'civilized'. The terms are antithetic to each other. Too often, peoples or cultures and religious practices are described as savage through sheer prejudice, lack of sympathy, or understanding."

Beckett (1994: 68) adds that, "It has been argued, however, that the missionaries saw nothing good within the non-Western cultures..." Here, it ought to be mentioned that some of the Ndaui practices were justifiably denounced, but 'wholesale' denouncing of almost all, if not all, Ndaui cultural practices was unfortunate and unnecessary. Practices that were justifiably denounced would include the killing of baby twins and of babies whose upper teeth emerged first.

Converted Ndaui were left with fluid identities. They were not really Ndaui in the fullest sense of the term, nor were they European. Beckett (1994: 68-69) makes it clear that "In essence, although the spiritual needs of Natives may have been met, a cultural vacuum (within new converts) tended to prevail. Converted Ndaui were no longer cultural, social or spiritual Ndaui. Neither, however, were they 'Western', European Ndaui." Converted Ndaui became social misfits in their own contexts and among fellow unconverted Ndaui.

Kate Hatch (1918: 98) details how new converts suffered opposition and constant threats from their unconverted relatives, among them fathers and brothers. Wood (1907: 56) mentions a case in which a mother wanted to 'break the cord' with his son who had 'confessed God'. Breaking the cord is a symbolical act in which two relatives hold each one end of a rope while the rope is cut in between. This cutting of the rope symbolises the end of the relationship between them.

Some of the Ndaui designations used by SAGM missionaries were particularly denigrating. Beckett (1994: 75) reports that "The Ndaui were described as 'ignorant', 'uncivilised', 'idlers', being of 'the lowest type, socially and morally'..." Beckett (1994) notes that Kidd (an SAGM missionary), in 1904, saw the mental state of the Ndaui as incapable of developing and as one to be pitied. The Ndaui was a 'misgrown child'. Beckett (1994: 77) further submits that "The missionaries perceived the Ndaui as being

completely dependent upon the 'white man', incapable of implementing any original initiatives aimed towards development. The 'native' was a '*tabula rasa*', a 'clean slate', possessing no history, no culture, simply awaiting, from the missionary, his or her salvation...".

The SAGM missionaries are said to have been overprotective of their converts. They had a strong fear that the converted would go back to their old evil ways. Beckett (1994: 112) mentions that "Missionary relations with Ndaou 'converts' would appear to have been very paternalistic in nature. The missionaries were 'protective of their flock', jealously guarding them from 'slipping back' into the ways of 'heathenism'."

The destruction of the Ndaou culture would appear to have been a 'grand goal' of the SAGM missionaries. Beckett (1994: 114-115) asserts that, "... the SAGM missionaries endorsed the destruction of Ndaou culture, without attempting to elucidate the fundamentals thereof. As such, in much of their behaviour, the SAGM missionaries clearly displayed the tenets of 'Western' Imperialist culture." Beckett (1994: 56-58) lists four principal assumptions held by the SAGM missionaries. They believed that non-Western cultures were evil in all aspects. They also believed that their own culture was a model of Christian lifestyle. Furthermore, they saw God's providence in British Imperial control – God's hand was at work in this Imperial mission. Lastly, they believed they were driven by the 'Great Commission'.

#### **4.6 NDAU PEOPLE'S ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE MISSIONARIES**

It is of paramount importance to consider how the Ndaou responded to the above. Beckett (1994: 91) notes, "Initially, the Ndaou displayed an attitude of fear and suspicion toward the SAGM missionaries with whom they interacted...". Beckett (1994: 94) adds that, "A subtle form of passive resistance to missionary presence was, however, prevalent amongst the Ndaou, the former taking on a number of forms. Thus, ranging from an attitude of aloof indifference concerning the Gospel message to one of firm resistance to any notion of change...". Hence, according to him (1994: 96), "The Ndaou were obviously reluctant to turn from their age-old customs and religious beliefs, to adopt the Christian faith, about which they knew very little."

Although the earlier years of the SAGM missionary work among the Ndau had been very difficult, without any converts to show for it, the latter years seem to have been much more fruitful. We have already noticed that under Douglas Wood, great inroads were made, and several Ndau began to trust the missionaries, to the extent of celebrating Christmas with them at the Mission station at Rusitu in 1901. The attitude should have continued to change for the better after the Holy Spirit manifestation in 1915 and during, as well as after, the influenza in 1918. Later years show that the SAGM missionaries worked with much acceptance among the Ndau. Consequently, it seems that the initial negative reception died down as the SAGM missionaries continued to work among the Ndau. Sadly, even this change of attitude among the Ndau did not move the SAGM missionaries to reconsider their harshness and lack of tolerance for Ndau customs and practices. Ndau marriage remained unaccepted in church until a church wedding was performed. The position has remained the same even under black church leadership.

#### **4.7 MISSIONARIES AND IMPERIALISM**

The relationship between missionaries and imperialism is complex. Shaw (2006: 274) calls the relationship between missionaries and the colonial government “The paradox of collaboration with the government...”. He (2006: 274) mentions that, “Colonialism was not an unmixed blessing for missions. ...Even while the missionaries cooperated with the forces of imperialism they also relished their role as leading critics of colonialism...”. In other words, the missionaries did not blindly support the colonial government in everything. They questioned and critiqued the government from time to time when the need arose.

The relationship between the missionaries and the colonial authorities cannot be easily dismissed. Hassing (1960: 301) mentions that, “Although the missionaries often opposed colonial policies and certain actions taken by the local administrators and in many affairs sided with the Africans, it was a mistaken idea that the missionaries were generally against the white people. They were for the British occupation of the country.” As Hassing (1960: x) puts it, “The relationship between the Christian missions and the expanding West was a real one”.



While they did not support the colonial government in everything, they shared some specific traits with it. Shaw (2006: 277) avers that, “There is sufficient documentary evidence to show that the racism and superiority attitude that is so often associated with colonialism was sometimes shared by the missionary...”. Such an attitude has already been demonstrated above to have hampered their understanding of the cultures of the people they evangelised.

*Serving in Mission website*, however, denies the accusation that missionaries were imperialists. Fuller (2007) maintains that, “Some critics allege that missionaries were colonial adventurers, extending the grasp of empire. SIM archives refute that stereotype, documenting the pioneers’ opposition to oppressive policies – imperial or nationalist. They considered that the colonizers (soldiers, administrators, and traders alike) had as much spiritual need as the indigenous peoples, and actively sought their conversion too.”

Some scholars argue that the African population had enough reason(s) to have held a negative attitude towards missionaries. Procter (1965: 34), for example, observes that, “If Africans turn against missionaries as they do against other Europeans, there may be good reasons for it. The differences between white missionaries and the white foreign rulers are not always clear, even to African believers. Not only are the ‘foreigners’ all white-skinned, but they dress alike, eat the same kinds of food, and talk the same language. When they meet, it is apparently on equal terms... Both employ Africans for wages and make rules governing hours and days of work, rest and holidays. The government officer imposes taxes and other obligations and issues identity cards and reference books, while the missionary keeps church records, issues cards – and talks of tithes and offerings. Both impose rules and make provision for the punishment of infractions, with police or school monitors to catch wrong-doers... Undoubtedly much of the blame for this situation can be placed squarely on the shoulders of the missionary himself [sic] who has failed to adjust himself and adapt his ways to the life of the people and by so doing commend the Gospel to his hearers.”

There is evidence of very good relationships and/or connections between the SAGM missionaries and the settlers, mostly settler farmers. There is mention of relationships between the SAGM missionaries and Kloppers (a farmer from Chimanimani); J.G.F. Stein (another farmer in Chikukwa, still in Chimanimani); and Marthinus Jacobus

Martin (of the second group of trekkers after the Moodies' (Dunbar and Thomas) one) (Dhube, 1997: 6-7).

Interestingly, the relationship between SAGM missionaries and settler colonialism is further exposed in the fact that they seemed to have a very cordial relationship with the District or Native Commissioner (Dhube, 1997: 8).

Missionaries influenced the local social and political system in many ways, consciously and unconsciously. They altered concepts of economic development, gender and marriage, institutions of land holding, forms of music and dress (Rennie, 1973:7). They were, therefore, a sweeping force in the places where they did their work, and made enormous changes to the human landscape.

Missionaries influenced politics as well, sometimes unconsciously. While doing their work of teaching and preaching to the African people, they awakened the passion for politics in those under their influence. As already established, Rennie (1973:3) asserts that, the mission was important in different ways in contributing to the development of nationalism. The establishment of missions in Southern Rhodesia was closely associated with the establishment of colonial rule. Missionaries taught Africans values which supported colonial rule and obedience to rulers, sometimes explicitly and often implicitly. Yet missions provided virtually the only opportunities by which Africans could gain the knowledge and skills necessary for social mobility in colonial society. The systems were such that one would like to be part of the missions so that he/she would also, like the others before him/her, benefit from the structures meant for skilled and/or educated blacks in colonial settings.

As already established, missionaries received tracts of land from the colonial government. As Zvobgo (1996: 366) indicates, "The generosity of Cecil John Rhodes and the British South Africa Company in offering Christian missionaries financial support as well as large areas of land on which to establish mission stations, made the evangelisation of the people of Mashonaland and Manicaland possible under the security of the new regime." It is irrefutable that the colonial systems aided the missionary enterprise to a very great extent.

In line with the above, Hassing comments that (1960: 233) "Cecil Rhodes ... was very generous with his grants of land for missionary purposes, and many of the

missionaries who wanted land, went straight to him, and he not only gave them a letter authorising them to peg out the land but in some cases even suggested on the map where they ought to go ...". Hassing (1960: 234) adds that "Nearly all the missionaries and the societies they represented accepted these gifts with gratitude, and considered themselves fortunate in being able to establish their new venture with such considerable resources at their disposal ...". Some Missions, however, did not accept such 'generous gifts' (Hassing, 1960: 317-318). The SAGM, for instance, did not receive a generous donation of land from the colonial government. There is evidence to show that it negotiated for land on its own with the chiefs, notably Dzingire and Ngorima.

Primary sources reveal that the SAGM missionaries were required to obtain permission from the colonial government to build although they had first negotiated for the site at Rusitu with the Ndau Chief Ngorima. Raney (1898: 37) states that "At last, after waiting over a year since our application was sent in, we have been able to sign a draft of the lease of this piece of ground, and now we can think of more permanent buildings, for these huts are not conducive to health in this trying climate." Galf (1899: 54) similarly writes, "We are glad to be in a position to state that the site for our first station in Gazaland has at last been settled; the Government having granted us six acres in the 'Native Reserve' on a lease at a merely nominal rent. The position is the one we have been occupying since entering the country, and where Mr Raney, Mr Middlemiss, and Mr Estall have been living in temporary huts. They will now proceed to build a more permanent dwelling ready for other workers who will be joining them later."

According to Kopp (2001: 22-27), the Mission's missionaries tried as much as was possible to stay clear of politics and political commentary in the places they worked in. Kopp (2001:44) adds that "The AEF strictly forbade its missionaries from involvement in any kind of party politics ... its personnel were to distance themselves from political issues".

Beckett (1994: 3) sets out to explore the issue of 'The Bible and the Flag' in his dissertation. He writes that he did not wish to exonerate Christian missionaries from all the charges which have been levelled against them, charges pertaining to their inherently controversial 'conduct' within colonised Africa. Beckett (1994: 3) asserts

that, "One must remember that they were 'products of their own history', and as such, were directly affected by the cultural, political, social and scientific perspectives of the British Imperialistic enterprise, from which they originated. Conversely, the missionaries were not 'passive acceptors' of all that was Imperialistic, and consequently, were free to reject or accept components of colonialism likely to stir controversy with Christian principles and precepts."

However, not all missionaries were the same. Their actions were also not homogeneous. According to Beckett (1994: 4) "From the outset, however, it is important to bear in mind that missionaries, the body of people embraced within the missionary enterprise, were extremely diverse in a number of aspects; theological, political, doctrinal, methodological, etc. Missionaries were not, as they have been portrayed in much contemporary literature, one 'homogeneous unit', apparently void of any distinctive, definite characteristics".

There are two extremes when it comes to analyses of missionaries. Some are over-defensive of their actions while others are over-critical. Beckett (1994: 13) asserts that both tenets of missionary analysis contain some elements of truth, but they tend to be far too generalised in their approach. He contends that a 'middle road' is required. Beckett (1994: 77-78) mentions that, "The SAGM missionaries interacted with the Ndau, in a manner differing greatly from the colonial counterparts. Ideally, the missionaries had entered Gazaland with the intention of evangelising the human landscape, and, as such, the Ndau people presented the focus of their work. Their compatriots, however, were fundamentally concerned with the profits ensuing exploitation of the physical landscape. The human landscape was, in their eyes, of secondary significance, proving to be, in a majority of cases, a 'veritable stumbling block', cruelly disregarded, exploited as 'cheap labour'." In other words, while they had connections with settlers and colonial authorities, SAGM missionaries also had the welfare of the Ndau at heart. This does not mean they were right in all they did but they seem to have had very good intentions even when they were wrong in their actions.

Missionaries were in a complex relationship with their fellow 'white' contemporaries – settlers and colonialists. For Beckett (1994: 79-80), "... although the missionaries distanced themselves from 'the effects of the treatment they (the Ndau) have

experienced at the hands of some whites', they were largely dependent upon the latter in several aspects; land for the mission station, the enforcement of a 'European legal system' to illegalise many of the customs practised by the Ndaou etc. The SAGM missionaries were, it would seem, in somewhat of a dilemma; part of the imperial enterprise, yet essentially alien from it, dependent upon its practices, yet seldom condoning the 'harsh treatment' of the indigenous population. The result – the apparent complexity displayed within the behaviour of the SAGM missionaries."

It is prudent to gain an understanding of who the SAGM missionaries considered themselves to be. Beckett (1994: 100) declares: "... The SAGM missionaries perceived themselves as 'servants of God', not 'tools of imperialism', working to extend the 'Kingdom of God', not the British Empire, in Gazaland." According to Kopp (2001: 16) mission history demonstrates that most missionaries supported colonialism but fought against its abuses. Nothing can be further from the truth than perpetrating a view that says the colonialists and the SAGM missionaries were one and the same thing.

Dachs (1973: 53) is convinced that the missionaries meant well in their exploits. He avers that, "... the whole range of missionary activity was productive of change, and that at the same time it was motivated by principles of Christian charity and love of one's neighbour. Thus the missionaries sought religious conversion and social change from a benevolent spirit; and they pursued an end which from their religious convictions they believed could be nothing but beneficial to the peoples they served. This gave at once a purpose and a force to all their actions."

The missionaries used their connection with the colonial authorities in their favour in many cases. According to Beckett (1994: 109), "... the Ndaou, including the Chief, were largely powerless in their dealings with the missionary, the latter possessing legal authority bestowed upon them by the colonial administration in Gazaland. Thus, converts to the Christian faith were usually protected from 'heathen' practices..."

The SAGM missionaries were on a mission to save Ndaou souls. Beckett (1994: 67) argues, "It would seem that the SAGM missionaries were primarily concerned not with material gain and the extension of Imperialism, but rather with the spiritual well-being of the people amongst whom they laboured. They firmly believed that the Lord Jesus Christ, as He claimed to be, was indeed, 'the way, the truth, and the life'... Thus, in

that sense, the missionaries endorsed a radical change within the 'heathen' lifestyle and culture." In other words, their trashing of some of the Ndaou customs could simply have been as a result of their "mission" and not just a deliberate plan to undermine them.

It ought to be stated, however, that the missionaries did not always get what they wanted from the white colonial government. An example that can be given here is that of marriage. Where the missionaries would have wanted the colonial administration to reform African marriage by law the latter did not always cooperate. The two had different interests and, consequently, they managed to cooperate in some cases but not in everything, all the time (Bhebe, 1979: 112, 113). In more precise terms, Bhebe (1973: 45) argues that, "The question of African marriages demonstrates how the missionaries wanted help from the British secular power in their task, and how unwillingly the Administration approached such ventures."

#### **4.8 CONCLUSION**

Chapter 4 dealt with the SAGM missionaries that evangelised the Ndaou people. Just like Chapter 3, it sought to give an orientation and/or some background to facilitate an understanding of the research findings chapters that ensue (Chapters 5 to 7). As emphasised in all the preceding chapters, Chapter 4 employed postcolonialism as the paradigm that undergirds the study. The chapter focused particularly on the SAGM that evangelised Chimanimani District (then part of British Gazaland) and the church that was born out of this Mission, UBC. It was divided into six major parts. The first dealt with Missionaries in Africa in General. The second was on Missionaries' Work in Zimbabwe. The third focused on SAGM. A brief history of the latter years of the Mission or the Church in Zimbabwe was considered specifically to show that UBC's position on marriages has not changed even after black clergy took over from the missionaries. The fourth major section was on SAGM Missionaries' Attitude Towards the Ndaou and their Culture. The fifth was devoted to Ndaou People's Attitude Towards the Missionaries. The last section discussed Missionaries and Imperialism. South Africa was shown as a central base as far as the evangelisation of Zimbabwe is concerned. As established, quotes from primary sources were integrated with this chapter.

Informed by Chapter 4 and the preceding chapters, the thesis moves now to present research findings in subsequent chapters. It is critical to reiterate that the research findings chapters will be presented from a postcolonial perspective with emphasis on hybridity in a Ndaou postcolonial context.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **RESEARCH FINDINGS AND LITERATURE CONTROL – PART 1**

#### **5.1 INTRODUCTION**

Following the phenomenological approach and postcolonialism as the paradigm that underpins this study, the current chapter presents the findings from the data collected through individual and focus group interviews in Chimanimani, Zimbabwe. The findings herein presented are based on the agreement between the independent coder and the researcher (with guidance from the research supervisors) that the themes, sub-themes, categories and sub-categories best represent the perceptions and views of the participants. Literature control is integrated with the presentation of the findings in this chapter. It ought to be mentioned right here at the onset that some scholars' contributions are used to support different points simply because their submissions are relevant to those separate points. Similarly, some participants' quotes will be used to buttress different themes, sub-themes, categories and/or sub-categories for the same reason stated earlier.

As was mentioned in Chapter 1, data was collected using the qualitative approach with the aim of developing an in-depth understanding of the Ndau people's perceptions and experiences on the connection between and the necessity of both the traditional and the Christian marriages in Chimanimani, Zimbabwe. As such, the study was not focussed on the number of occurrences of phenomena but on the nature of social phenomena (Boeije, 2010: 24). As a qualitative study, the research sought to comprehend the Ndau traditional marriage practices and the Christian marriage practices as the Ndau understand them. A major strength of qualitative research is that its purpose "is to describe and understand social phenomena in terms of the meaning people bring to them ..." (Boeije, 2010: 11). This "meaning" is also called "the socially constructed nature of reality" (Denzin & Ryan, 2007: 582) and the "meaning that people award to their social worlds" (Boeije, 2010: 12).

The research made use of both the phenomenological approach and postcolonialism. The former was employed during fieldwork. The latter was utilised in analysing the data. Phenomenology was used to describe the understandings of marriage, both African and Western while postcolonialism is the paradigm from which this thesis



proceeds. Using postcolonialism, the research seeks to afford the Ndaup people of Chimanimani a degree of voice and space to assert their identity and the relevance of their marriage practices in a hybrid context. As was emphasised in Chapter 1 the thesis is not a search for lost origins. It is not a “parody of the nostalgia for lost origins” (Spivak, 1995: 675, 677). It seeks to establish how the Ndaup make sense of their marriage practices in a hybrid setting (Chidester, 2000: 433; Ranger, 1996: 27).

The study employed purposive sampling and theoretical sampling. Adults (18 years and above) who were considered to be knowledgeable as far as the Ndaup marriage practices are concerned were interviewed. Saturation determined the population size.

The next section provides the profiles of the participants for both the individual interviews and the focus groups.

## **5.2 BIOGRAPHICAL PROFILES OF THE PARTICIPANTS**

The following biographic information of all the participants is presented using pseudonyms (no real names have been used). In total, 20 individual interviews and 5 focus group interviews were conducted.

- **Demographic information of the participants**

The demographic information of the participants will be reported in six parts. The following (Table 5.1) is the demographic information of participants who were interviewed individually in individual interviews. The next five tables give the demographic information of participants that were interviewed in focus groups. Each of the tables (Table 5.2 to 5.6) carries the demographic information of the participants in separate focus groups.

**Table 5.1 Demographic information of participants in individual interviews**

Participant Pseudonym	Gender	Marital Status	Age	Church Affiliation	Position in Church or in the community
Sekai	Female	Married	75	United Baptist Church (UBC)	Church member
Dakarai	Male	Divorced	55	UBC	Church member
Edwin	Male	Married	82	UBC	Church member
Anesu	Female	Married	42	UBC	Pastor's wife
John	Male	Married	82	UBC	Retired pastor and marriage officer
Eric	Male	Married	83	UBC	Church member
Paida	Male	Single	19	UBC	Church member
Rudo	Female	Single	32	UBC	Church member
Prisca	Female	Married	50	UBC	Pastor's wife
Patrick	Male	Married	52	UBC	Pastor and marriage officer
Vimbai	Male	Single	25	UBC	Church member
Hebert	Male	Married	82	UBC	Retired SAGM Missionary
Aurthur	Male	Married	74	Anglican	Ndau headman Church member
Noel	Male	Married	93	Zvakazarurwa (African Initiated Church)	Church member
Godfrey	Male	Married	38	UBC	Pastor

Pretty	Female	Single	52	Seventh Day Adventist	Church member
Pride	Male	Married	37	UBC	Church member
Kumbirai	Male	Married	58	Apostolic Faith Mission (AFM)	Church Elder
Farai	Male	Married	50	N/A	
Fungai	Male	Married	93	UBC	Church member

**Table 5.2 Demographic information of a couple interviewed together in focus group 1**

Participant Pseudonym	Gender	Marital Status	Age	Church Affiliation	Position in Church or in the community
Batsirai	Male	Married	73	UBC	Retired Pastor (marriage officer)
Yeukai	Female	Married	69	UBC	Pastor's wife

**Table 5.3 Demographic information of participants in focus group 2**

Participant Pseudonym	Gender	Marital Status	Age	Church Affiliation	Position in Church or in the community
Tapuwa	Male	Married	35	UBC	Pastor (marriage officer)
Faith	Female	Married	27	UBC	Pastor's wife
Ronald	Male	Single	24	UBC	Youth leader
Taurai	Male	Married	28	UBC	Member
Fred	Male	Married	45	UBC	Member
Shamiso	Female	Single	19	UBC	Member

**Table 5.4 Demographic information of church women interviewed in focus group****3**

Participant Pseudonym	Gender	Marital Status	Age	Church Affiliation	Position in Church or in the community
Nyasha	Female	Married	66	UBC	Member
Linda	Female	Married	34	UBC	Pastor's wife
Salome	Female	Widowed	78	UBC	Member
Juliet	Female	Married	62	UBC	Member
Mary	Female	Married	60-70	UBC	Member
Joyce	Female	Widowed	65	UBC	Member
Nomsa	Female	Married	51	UBC	Member
Sarah	Female	Married	65	UBC	Member
Eunice	Female	Married	56	UBC	Member
Lindiwe	Female	Married	37	UBC	Member
Angeline	Female	Widowed	64	UBC	Member

**Table 5.5 Demographic information of women interviewed in focus group 4**

Participant Pseudonym	Gender	Marital Status	Age	Church Affiliation	Position in Church or in the community
Linnet	Female	Single	40-50	UBC	Member
Janet	Female	Widowed	41	United Methodist Church (UMC)	Member
Loice	Female	Single	20-30	Zion Church (African Initiated Church)	Member
Precious	Female	Single	23	Assemblies of God (AOG)	Member

**Table 5.6 Demographic information of men interviewed in focus group 5**

Participant Pseudonym	Gender	Marital Status	Age	Church Affiliation	Position in Church or in the community
Samuel	Male	Widower	87	UBC	Member (Ndau Headman)
Evans	Male	Married	68	UBC	Retired Pastor
Simba	Male	Married	74	UMC	Member
Tonderai	Male	Married (3 wives)	82	Johane Marange Church (African Initiated Church)	Member

The tables above indicate that most of the participants came from the United Baptist Church which is one of the biggest churches in Chimanimani, Zimbabwe. Some of the participants were pastors and pastors' wives, including marriage officers in this category. While most of the participants stemmed from missionary-founded churches there were a few who belonged to African Initiated Churches (AICs). The latter term, in this thesis, refers to churches that originated in Zimbabwe among the indigenous people without any instrumentality of missionaries and/or Westerners. These AICs in many cases arose in reaction to the Western form of Christianity presented in missionary-founded churches. As such, AICs sought (and still seek) to be more relevant to the African context. The problems of duplicating marriages and the imposition of church weddings do not apply to AICs because they wholly accept traditional marriages as sufficient for church purposes.

In the light of the discussion on AICs above, Idowu (1965: 1) raises questions that seek to explore whether the form of Christianity in Nigeria is not merely an imposition of "a European Institution which has no beneficial relevance for Nigerians". In light of such a concern, this study posits that it is critical that Christianity among the Ndau should be packaged in ways that are relevant to a Ndau context.

Some of the participants were single while others were married and yet others were divorcees. The youngest to be interviewed were 19 years old and the oldest two were 93 years old. This wide range in terms of age was meant to obtain perspectives from both young and old people, and from both married and unmarried people. The elderly were included because they were presumed to be well versed in the Ndaup people's marriage practices over time. The elderly included one old retired white missionary, old pastors (some of whom have retired) and old people in general. The married were included in order to acquire their understanding of marriage practices as well. The researcher visited churches and homes to interview married people. Unmarried people were also interviewed in order to solicit their views on marriage practices too. Most of these were interviewed in their homes.

Care was taken to obtain perspectives from both male and female participants. This applied for both individual interviews and focus groups and was done to ensure that the findings were not gender biased.

### **5.3 THEMES EMERGING FROM THE DATA**

Seven themes came out of the data analysis process. These were further subdivided into sub-themes, categories and sub-categories. The following table (Table 5.7) furnishes an outline of these.

The themes, sub-themes, categories and sub-categories presented below were deduced from the recorded transcriptions of the interviews and focus groups. Storylines were extracted from these transcriptions to support each of the themes and their subdivisions. As already stated at the beginning of this chapter some of the storylines were used to support different points in this and ensuing research findings chapters because they were relevant for the different points. All these were informed by the postcolonial theory which concerns itself with the responses of the colonised to the cultural and political impact of European conquest on colonised societies (Ashcroft & Ahluwalia, 2001: 15, 40). The themes and their subdivisions were derived from the responses of participants to the questions to be found in **ADDENDUM C** (and to the probes the researcher made during the interviews).

**Table 5.7 Themes, sub-themes, categories and sub-categories**

<b>THEME 1: MARRIAGE PRACTICES AMONGST THE NDAU PEOPLE</b>		
<b>Sub-theme</b>	<b>Category</b>	<b>Sub-category</b>
1.1: Known marriages practices of the Ndau people	1.1.1 <i>Roor</i> a is the most common and known marriage practice amongst the Ndau people	1.1.1.2 <i>Roor</i> a is part of different ways of marriage <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Roor</i>a and <i>mutimba</i></li> <li>• <i>Roor</i>a and <i>kutizira</i></li> <li>• <i>Roor</i>a and <i>kutizisa mukumbo</i></li> <li>• <i>Roor</i>a and <i>musengabere</i></li> <li>• <i>Roor</i>a and <i>kufohla</i></li> </ul>
	1. 1.2 <i>Mutimba</i>	1.1.2.1 <i>Mutimba</i> refers to celebration of the marriage
		1.1.2.2 How <i>mutimba</i> takes place
	1.1.3 <i>Kutizisa mukumbo</i>	1.1.3.1 <i>Kutiza mukumbo</i> is the same as <i>kutizira</i> ; a girl fleeing to the man's home
		1.1.3.2 How <i>kutiza mukumbo</i> takes place
	1.1.4 <i>Kuganha</i>	1.1.4.1 <i>Kuganha</i> means the girl goes to the man's home
		1.1.4.2 How <i>kuganha</i> takes place
	1.1.5 <i>Musengabere</i>	1.1.5.1 <i>Musangabere</i> means abducting the girl
		1.1.5.2 The love and consent may or not be mutual in <i>musengabere</i>
		1.1.5.3 How <i>musengabere</i> takes place <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The girl is abducted and</li> </ul>

		<p>taken to the man's home and remains at the man's home</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parents are notified</li> <li>• Formalities are done later</li> </ul>
		1.1.5.4 Views on prevalence of <i>musengabere</i> differ
	1.1.6 <i>Kutizira</i>	1.1.6.1. Various words <i>kutizira</i> , <i>kufohla</i> and <i>dorwa</i> are used to refer to more or less the same happening
		1.1.6.2 <i>Kutizira</i> refers to a pregnant girl going to the man's home
		<p>1.1.6.3 There are various ways that the pregnant girl goes to the man's home</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• She is taken by aunt(s)</li> <li>• She goes alone</li> <li>• She goes alone but the aunt(s) follow up</li> <li>• She is driven away from home</li> <li>• The man takes her to his home</li> </ul>
		<p>1.1.6.4 How <i>kutizira</i> takes place</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Kutizira</i> takes place at night</li> <li>• Girl's parents are informed</li> <li>• <i>Roora</i> is paid</li> </ul>



		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How the <i>roora</i> takes place with <i>kutizira</i></li> <li>• <i>Kutizira</i> is without <i>mutimba</i></li> </ul>
	1.1.7 <i>Kugarwa nhaka</i> - man marrying a widow of brother is no longer practiced	
	1.1.8 <i>Kuzvarira</i> - widower marrying wife's brother's daughter is no longer practiced	
	1.1.9 <i>Kugara mapfiwa</i> widower marrying wife's sister	
	1.1.10 <i>Kuriga mutanda</i>	1.1.10.1 <i>Kuriga mutanda</i> refers to claiming a baby girl for marriage to a son in the future
		1.1.10.2 In <i>kuriga mutanda</i> the choice of girl was because the family was from the same community, they liked the family or to appease the spirit of a male killed by a relative of the girl
		1.1.10.3 <i>Kuriga mutanda</i> is done before or after a girl child's birth
		1.1.10.4 The log (a claim symbol) can be deposited by a father, mother or any other woman in the boy's family
		1.1.10.5 How <i>kuriga mutanda</i> was done
		1.1.10.6 <i>Kuriga mutanda</i> was accepted Ndaou tradition that

		is still practiced especially in Mozambique
	1.1.11 <i>Kutema ugariri</i>	1.1.11.1 Synonyms and meaning of <i>Kutema ugariri</i>
		1.1.11.2 How <i>Kutema ugariri</i> was done
		1.1.11.3 <i>Kutema ugariri</i> is no longer practiced
	1.1.12 <i>Chinebvudzi</i> : girl given as compensation for offence	
	1.1.13 <i>Kuputswa</i>	1.1.13.1 There are two versions of <i>Kuputswa</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In a famine a girl is given in marriage in exchange for food</li> <li>• A girl is given in marriage in exchange for money to pay her brother's <i>roora</i></li> </ul>
		1.1.13.2 <i>Kuputswa</i> is still practiced among the Ndau people of Chipinge
	1.1.14 <i>Roora</i> with church wedding is widely practiced	
	1.1.15 White Christian church wedding	
	1.1.16 Civil marriage: before a district officer	
1.2: Present state of different ways of marrying among the Ndau	1.2.1 Some have died out	
	1.2.2 Some are still practiced	

1.3 Reasons for customs (ways of getting married) having died out	1.3.1 Western influence	
	1.3.2 Christianity	
	1.3.3 Zimbabwean Constitution and laws	
	1.3.4 Education	
	1.3.5 Livelihood changes: Employment and available currency	
	1.3.6 Women's rights	
	1.3.7 Globalisation	
	1.3.8 People themselves have changed	

THEME 2: MOST PREFERRED WAY OF MARRIAGE AMONGST THE NDAU PEOPLE		
2.1 Paying <i>roora</i> and <i>mutimba</i> were referred to as the preferred way of marriage amongst the Ndau	2.1.1 The paying of the <i>roora</i> is referred to as the most preferred traditional way of marriage	
	2.1.2 The <i>mutimba</i> is referred to as the preferred traditional way of marriage which includes the paying of the <i>roora</i> and the wife being accompanied to the husband's home	
2.2 Other than preferred, <i>roora</i> and <i>mutimba</i> are referred to as 'most acceptable, expected, well prepared, and right (proper) way'		
2.3 <i>Mutimba</i> is the celebration		

2.4 Elements and sequence of <i>mutimba</i>	2.4.1 Man and girl fall in love and agree to get married	
	2.4.2 Parents are informed	2.4.2.1 Ways of informing the parents on the girl's side
		2.4.2.2 Ways of informing the parents on the man's side
	2.4.3 The <i>roora</i> is paid and further arrangements ensue	
	2.4.4 <i>Kuperekedza</i> : the girl is accompanied to the man's home at night	2.4.4.1 Preparations are done
		2.4.4.2 Aunts of the bride and/or others accompany the bride
		2.4.4.3 Happenings on the way to and arrival at the groom's home at night
		2.4.4.4 How the night is spent
		2.4.4.5 Slaughtering and eating of chickens and goats and other food rituals
	2.4.5 The morning rituals of cleaning and <i>mafuta</i>	
	2.4.6 Festivities	
	2.4.7 The bride goes to the husband's sleeping room	
	2.4.8 The bride's family and friends return home but some people remain with the bride for a while	
	2.4.9 The bride's aunts return home	

	2.4.10 <i>Kubikiswa</i> : The bride cooks in her own separate kitchen	
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<b>THEME 3: VARIOUS REASONS FOR HAVING A WHITE/ CHURCH WEDDING AFTER TRADITIONAL MARRIAGE</b>		
3.1 People have a church wedding after a traditional marriage for celebration		
3.2 People have a church wedding after a traditional marriage for God's blessing		
3.3 People have a church wedding after a traditional marriage because it is regarded as God's requirement according to the Bible		
3.4 People have a church wedding after a traditional marriage because they have converted to Christianity		
3.5 People have a church wedding after a traditional marriage because it is a church requirement/rule		
3.6 People have a church wedding after a traditional marriage because church teaching encourages church weddings		
3.7 People have a church wedding after traditional marriage for different levels of recognition and acceptance in the church	3.7.1 People have a church wedding after a traditional marriage for recognition of the marriage	

	3.7.2 People have a church wedding after a traditional marriage for recognition of the marriage and acceptance and access to serving in the church	
	3.7.3 People have a church wedding after a traditional marriage for social acceptance in the church	
3.8 People have a church wedding after a traditional marriage for general social recognition		
3.9 People have a church wedding after a traditional marriage because of the association of Christianity with Europeanisation/Westernisation		
3.10 People have a church wedding after a traditional marriage because it is regarded as a deterrent to unfaithfulness and polygamy		
3.11 People have a church wedding after a traditional marriage because church weddings have wider official recognition than traditional marriages		
3.12 People have a church wedding after a traditional marriage for (convenience and) material advantages		

<b>THEME 4: PERCEIVED RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TRADITIONAL MARRIAGE RITES AND CHRISTIAN MARRIAGE</b>		
4.1 Different perceptions on equality of traditional marriage rites and Christian church weddings	4.1.1 Traditional marriage and Christian marriages are equal in terms of value (superior–inferior) and validity	
	4.1.2 Traditional marriage and Christian marriages are not regarded as being equal	
4.2 Different perceptions on the interrelatedness of traditional marriage rites and Christian church weddings	4.2.1 Traditional marriage and church weddings are perceived as going together	
	4.2.2 Traditional marriage is perceived as a prerequisite for a church wedding	
	4.2.3 Traditional marriage is regarded as being incomplete without a church wedding	
4.3 Perceived commonalities between traditional marriage rites and Christian church weddings	4.3.1 Both forms of marriage require the permission to marry from the parents	
	4.3.2 Both forms of marriage ceremonies are about joining families and a couple living together	
	4.3.3 Both forms of marriage indicate the connection to identity, i.e. clan and faith community	
4.4 Perceptions about churches' views on the relationship between	4.4.1 Some churches fully recognise traditional marriage	

traditional marriage rites and Christian marriage		
	4.4.2 Some churches partly recognise traditional marriage	
	4.4.3 Some churches do not recognise traditional marriage	
4.5 Perceived distinctions between traditional marriage rites and Christian marriage	4.5.1 The one is Western tradition and the other is Ndau tradition	
	4.5.2. The church wedding is a Christian way and the traditional way is not	
	4.5.3 Parents do not participate in celebration of their daughter's marriage in traditional marriage	
	4.5.4 It is easier to divorce after traditional marriage than after church wedding	
	4.5.5 The church wedding is more expensive than the traditional marriage	
	4.5.6 The traditional marriage makes people more vulnerable than church wedding	
	4.5.7 The church wedding has official recognition/ legal acceptance and is documented which the traditional marriage does not have	



	4.5.8 The church wedding is socially more acceptable than a traditional wedding	
	4.5.9 Church wedding includes receiving (more) gifts than with the traditional marriage	

**THEME 5: DIFFERENT VIEWS ON THE SUFFICIENCY OF TRADITIONAL MARRIAGES**

5. 1 Traditional marriage is regarded as sufficient		
5.2 Traditional marriage is regarded as not sufficient because it is not official (not legally registered) and without a certificate		
5.3 Traditional marriage is not regarded as sufficient for a Christian	5.3.1: The traditional marriage is not regarded as sufficient for a Christian because it lacks God's blessing	
	5.3.2: The traditional marriage is not regarded as sufficient for a Christian because it is not before God	
	5.3.3: The traditional marriage is not regarded as sufficient for a Christian because it is without documentation/a certificate	
	5.3.4: The traditional marriage is not regarded as sufficient for a Christian because it is not sufficient for	

	recognition for full participation in church	
	5.3.5: The traditional marriage is not regarded as sufficient for a Christian because traditional marriage lacks the social support advantages of a church wedding	

THEME 6: THOUGHTS ON THE EXPENSES OF CHURCH WEDDINGS		
6.1 Church weddings are (too) expensive		
6.2 Church weddings favour the rich and are a burden for and discriminate against the poor		
6.3 Expenses of a church wedding have various negative consequences	6.3.1 Expenses of a church wedding are a deterrent to people getting married	
	6.3.2. Expenses of a church wedding are a deterrent to church weddings	
	6.3.3. Expenses of a church wedding delay some people in getting married	
	6.3.4. Expenses of a church wedding are a reason for a lot of cohabitation	
	6.3.5. Expenses of a church wedding are a reason for a lot of premarital pregnancies	
	6.3.6. Expenses of a church wedding are a reason for elopement	

	6.3.7. Expenses of a church wedding encourage marrying for money	
	6.3.8. Expenses of a church wedding put the bridegroom into debt	
	6.3.9. Expenses of a church wedding cause stress and put pressure on marriage	
	6.3.10. Expenses of a church wedding distort the meaning of a wedding	
	6.3.11. Expenses of a church wedding add pressure to marriages	
6.4. Expenses of a church wedding also have positive effects	6.4.1 Expenses incurred create a sense of achievement	
	6.4.2 Expenses incurred for a church wedding make for valuing marriage and partner more	
6.5. Various explanations/reasons/causes are given for having expensive weddings	6.5.1. Choice: People choose to have expensive weddings	
	6.5.2. African and Western cultural reasons	6.5.2.1 Own communal culture ( <i>Ubuntu</i> )
		6.5.2.2 The expenses are a result of Western cultural influence
	6.5.3. The expenses are the result of social pressure and socialisation to meet expectations and impress people	

6.6 Nature of expenses incurred for church weddings	6.6.1 Food/catering	
	6.6.2 Attire: clothes, rings	
	6.6.3 Retinue/wedding teams	
	6.6.4 Venue and decor	
	6.6.5 Cars and transport, accommodation	
	6.6.6 Other	
6.7 Experiences and suggestions on countering of church wedding expenses	6.7.1 Experiences on countering of church wedding expenses	
	6.7.2 Suggestions on countering of church wedding expenses	6.7.2.1: Combine traditional and church wedding with existing church activities
		6.7.2.2: Simplify, stay within your means
		6.7.2.3: Churches should teach that church weddings are not primarily about the expensive celebration/festivities
		6.7.2.4: Create awareness that expensive weddings are optional not mandatory

THEME 7: HOW PARTICIPANTS MARRIED AND REASONS THEREFOR		
7.1: Some participants married traditionally by <i>roora</i> and <i>mutimba</i> only, due to tradition/parents' teaching		
7.2: Many participants married by <i>roora</i> and church wedding		

7.3 <i>Roora</i> part of marriage and church wedding is done because it is required by tradition		
7.4 Church wedding with <i>roora</i> and <i>mutimba</i> is done for various reasons	7.4.1 <i>Roora</i> is not enough: a Christian is expected to marry in church	
	7.4.2 A Christian: wanted God's blessing and honour God, conviction	
	7.4.3 Associated with employment: teacher at mission school, pastor	
	7.4.4 Partner's wish	
	7.4.5 It is official: marriage certificate, registered	
	7.4.6 Belief that it increases fidelity	
	7.4.7 Doing what others do; copy others	
	7.4.8 Family/parents' expectation	
	7.4.9 To not be ashamed	
7.5. Some participants married traditionally ( <i>roora</i> and <i>mutimba</i> ) and by a church wedding because marriage took place before becoming a Christian		

This chapter will present the first one of the following themes:

- Theme 1: Marriage practices amongst the Ndau people
- Theme 2: Most preferred way of marriage amongst the Ndau people
- Theme 3: Various reasons for having a white/church wedding after traditional marriage

- Theme 4: Perceived relationship between traditional marriage rites and Christian marriage
- Theme 5: Different views on the sufficiency of traditional marriages
- Theme 6: Thoughts on the expenses of church weddings
- Theme 7: How participants married and reasons therefor

The above-mentioned themes together with their sub-themes, categories and sub-categories will be considered in this and in subsequent chapters. Storylines from the interviews and focus groups will be used to support the themes and their subdivisions. Literature control will likewise be integrated. As a matter of principle, each theme, sub-theme, category or subcategory will be supported by storylines and scholars' contributions where possible. Square brackets [...] in quotes will be utilised to show that what is within them is my own addition; not part of storylines as gleaned from the participants' responses.

## **5.4 THEME 1: MARRIAGE PRACTICES AMONGST THE NDAU PEOPLE**

In response to the question: "What ways of traditional Ndaу marriages do you know?" the participants had a lot to say. It would appear, as Ngundu (2010: 35) puts it, that "The African (Shona) people had a well-structured system of marriage."

The participants mentioned numerous Ndaу ways of getting married, suggesting that the Ndaу had a rich and complex marriage system as has been mentioned in Chapter 3. The marriage system was meant to ensure that all the Ndaу men and women, young women and young men got married. MacGonagle (2007: 62) mentions that "The Ndaу expected all young women to marry and follow "a path" of marriage ...". The same can be said about all young Ndaу men.

### **1.1 Sub-theme: Known marriage practices amongst the Ndaу people**

#### **1.1.1 *Roor*a is the most common and known marriage practice amongst the Ndaу people**

*Roora* featured in all the responses as a common feature in all the different types of Ndaau marriages. The Ndaau marriages, in a sense, cannot be justifiably discussed without discussing the place of *roora* in them.

Missionaries attempted to stop the practice of *roora* payment in vain. Chapter 4 has already shown this. According to Daneel (1971: 249), “Generally speaking, the attitude of Protestant missionaries, in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, was marked by an inclination to condemn the *roora* practice outright. This was resented by the Africans ...”. Ngundu (2010: 94) reports that a South Africa General Mission (SAGM) missionary, “John E. Hatch, proposed, in a meeting of The Southern Rhodesia Missionary Conference (SRMC) on African customary marriage held between 27 and 29 June 1906 in Salisbury (now Harare), that missionaries should ‘refuse to accept any African Christian as a church member who gives or receives cattle or money as *lobolo* [*roora*] in payment for a wife, because *lobolo* [*roora*] was considered a hindrance ‘to spiritual growth among their African converts.’” Chapter 4 contains a quotation from Hatch to this effect.

Despite its being discussed at length, the SRMC (Southern Rhodesia Missionary Conference, 1906) could not agree on the issue, opting instead to leave each missionary organisation to freely impose its own church rules on *roora*. The conference “acknowledged some real difficulties about attempting to prohibit the *lobolo* {*roora*} system, given its central place within the African family structure” (Ngundu, 2010: 95).

*Roora* is therefore a longstanding established practice among the Ndaau in particular and the Shona in general. The cultural conquest of the European failed to eradicate it and as such the Ndaau have continued to find space for *roora* in a hybrid environment. It serves several purposes, one of which is to legitimise the husband and wife’s relationship so that the children that they bear may be legitimate offspring. It is widely believed to be a token of appreciation to the bride’s family for raising a daughter that the groom could marry. In other words, it is compensation to the bride’s family for the loss of a daughter. It can also be understood as a guarantee of good faith between the two families, making it difficult for either party to break up the marriage. It is, therefore, believed to stabilise the marriage and to give protection to the wife. *Roora*

also forms an alliance between the two families or between two kinship groups (Ngundu, 2010: 20, 162; Thorpe, 1991: 63; Mair, 1969: ix).

*Roora* was initially called 'bride-price' by the Westerners. Many anthropologists rejected the term because it connotes a purchase or a sale. The term 'bridewealth' was (and is) anthropologically perceived to be the more correct term to describe the marriage gift or 'marriage money and/or goods' paid by the groom to the bride's family (Fiedler, 1998: 48; Madumere, 1995: 29; Bhebhe, 1995: 56-57; Mair, 1965: 5). In this study, the term *roora* will be used with reference to the 'marriage money and goods'.

Although many early missionaries were opposed to *roora* which they perceived to be the selling of girls and women, they all came to learn that it was the African way of constituting a legal marriage (Fiedler, 1998: 48-49; Zvobgo, 1996: 108-109). It can be said therefore that the Nda, among other Africans, managed to assert this cultural practice irrespective of the fact that the missionaries wanted it dead. As such *roora* was preserved and continues to be highly valued to date. One can justifiably assert that the Nda were not passive receptors in the cultural conquest of the Europeans. Instead, they kept on reinterpreting, redefining and reasserting at least some of their cultural practices. The fact that they did not ditch everything of their own in order to adopt the Victorian marriage practices that the missionaries proffered is enough proof to substantiate this point.

The forms of *roora* payment have evolved over centuries. According to Thorpe (1991: 63) bridewealth is usually an agreed number of cattle or, nowadays, cash. In Nda history, as was mentioned in Chapter 3, many other items could be used, including hoes.

Courtship is the first step followed by marriage negotiations and *roora* payments, although this varies in the different forms of marriages among the Nda as will be seen below. Marriage is legalised by *roora* among the Nda, where the third and final stage in the Nda traditional marriage process is the handing over of the bride (Ngundu, 2010: 19-20). This will be explored more fully in the discussion of *mutimba* later on in the chapter.



It should be noted, however, that the exchange of small tokens or pledges between the man and the woman preceded marriage negotiations and *roora* payment. This exchange was a pledge of love and agreement to marry (Ngundu, 2010: 164).

This is what the participants had to say about *roora*:

**Kumbirai** and **Rudo** allude to *roora* as part of Ndaau marriages.

**Kumbirai** mentioned the place of *roora* in Ndaau marriages as follows: *“This way yekubvunzira (of asking for a wife and paying roora) is a very respectable way indeed. Yes, it is very respectable in our Ndaau culture.”*

**Rudo** had this to say: *“I know a way in which when someone finds a partner when you now want to get married, the man comes to your family and pay roora. Then if you don’t want to wed the girl will be accompanied to her husband’s home by the aunts. If you want to wed after roora is paid you stay with your parents as the man prepares for the wedding. After the wedding the girl will then go to her husband’s home.”*

What **Kumbirai** and **Rudo** discussed is recorded by Holleman (1952: 99) to be known by various terms, among them “*kubvunzira* (to ask for), *kumema* (to call), *kutumira* (to send for), *kunanzwa mavoko* (to lick hands)”. All these refer to the practice where a would-be son-in-law goes with his people to the family of the woman he wants to marry, for the purpose of marriage negotiations and for payment of *roora*. At the conclusion of these negotiations and the *roora* payment (at least the part that he would have managed to raise), the in-laws would make a pronouncement that they were giving their daughter to the son-in-law. The son in law would then tell the in-laws if he wished to have a church wedding or if the in-laws should arrange to send his ‘wife’ to him in *mutimba*.

In the event that the son-in-law wanted to prepare for a church wedding, the woman would remain with her parents until the day of the wedding. In cases where a church wedding was not to be arranged, *mutimba* would follow. As Ngundu (2010: 21) notes, the in-laws “would prepare items which she would take with her because she was not supposed to go empty handed. A day was set for the handover ceremony in consultation with the paternal aunt who was the adult key link throughout the marriage process. On the appointed evening the bride was escorted normally by her aunts,

sisters and other close female relatives. The handing over of the bride always took place in the evening ...". Whenever the 'aunt' is mentioned in this thesis the word refers to the 'paternal aunt'. There will be more discussion of the handover ceremony later on in this study.

#### **1.1.1.2 Roora is part of different ways of marriage**

As has been mentioned above, *roora* is part of different customs of marriage.

- ***Roora and Mutimba***

Even in cases where the bride will be accompanied to her groom's home, as discussed above, *roora* has to be paid first.

**Pride** responded that: *"Yes. Then paying roora and doing mutimba afterwards ..."*

**Pretty** explained as follows: *"The son in law will have paid roora and he does not have money for a white wedding so the girl's relatives arrange to take her to her husband's home. That is when mutimba is done. She is accompanied to her husband's home in a very good way. When they get there there will be ululations as she is received into the husband's family."*

As emphasised earlier on, the bride's family was supposed to prepare items with which they would accompany her to the groom's home (Ngundu, 2010: 21). This form of marriage was the most acceptable, as the participants' responses will show later on in this chapter. Ngundu (2010: 26) asserts that this form or method of marrying (that of requesting a wife or contracting a marriage) was the most acceptable in Shona (Ndau) traditional society although it was by no means the only form of marriage.

- ***Roora and kutizira***

*Roora* still has to be paid even in cases where a girl or woman elopes.

**Pretty** referred to this when she responded: *“Oh, so kutizira is a way without mutimba? So, in this case they will have paid roora but there is no gathering money for the wedding.”*

- **Roora and kutizisa mukumbo**

Although *kutizira* and *kutizisa* can be differentiated in Shona or Ndaou, the two terms can be used interchangeably, and they both mean elopement in English. As Vijfhuizen (2002: 21) points out, “in practice *kutizisa* and *kutizira* are very difficult to distinguish.”

**Ronald** had this to say: *“Then there is another one, kutizisa mukumbo. It is a way of getting married. A young man meets a girl that he loves. They fall in love and agree that the girl flees to his home and she flees. That’s kutizisa mukumbo. Later, maybe with one or two children already, that is when the man will go formally to pay roora.”*

**Rudo** also indicated that *roora* is paid even in elopement marriages. In her words: *“Yes, she flees from home and goes to her man’s home. They will look for her at her home. Some men will send someone with money to just inform her parents that he is with her (tsvakiraikuno literally means ‘search here’). Once that money is paid, the man will be preparing to pay more money now for roora, or to marry officially.”*

**Aurthur** concurs with **Rudo**: *“These are ways for example where a boy finds a girl, falls in love with her and takes her without paying roora and without following the proper channels. Later then the boy will send someone to pay tsvakiraiuno [a small amount that is paid accompanying a message that your daughter is with me].”*

According to Holleman (1952: 109), “This most popular marriage procedure, generally known as *kutizisa* (causative of *kutiza*, to run away), is characterized by a pre-arranged elopement of a girl with her swain as a prelude to formal marriage negotiations.” It, therefore, still leads to marriage negotiations and the payment of *roora*.

*Tsvakiraiuno*, as indicated, was a small amount of cash that was sent to the girl or woman’s parents with a go-between (*munyai*) to inform them that their daughter was

safe and that she had eloped. In some cases the payment could be a hoe. The intermediary would go some few days after the elopement. He would not directly declare the purpose of his visit as noted earlier (Holleman, 1952: 111). *Tsvakiraiuno* remains a small amount of cash today.

Although it is generally believed that the most frequent approach to Shona/Ndau marriages was the *yekubvunzira* (requesting for a wife), Holleman (1952: 113), on the contrary, notes that elopement was the most popular prelude to marriage and adds that this was not due to modern circumstances. It seems, therefore, that the most acceptable way of marriage among the Ndau was not the most common or prevalent way of marrying even in traditional Ndau (or Shona) societies.

- **1.1.2.4 Roora and Musengabere**

*Roora* still had to be paid even in cases where a man would literally have forcibly carried a girl or woman that he loved to his home without her consent.

**Edwin** said this about *musengabere* and *roora*: “Yes [issues about *kuteya* (*roora* payment) would be arranged later], later after she will have already come. Same applies with the *kutizira* way described above; the *kuteya* would be done later. The go-betweens (*vanyai*) would then go with money for *roora*.”

- **Roora and Kufohla**

*Kufohla* denotes the same as *kutizira* and *kutizisa* and, as such, *roora* still would be paid in *kufohla* cases. *Kufohla* is the most fully Ndau term for elopement compared to *kutizira* and *kutizisa*. The latter two are borrowed from Zezuru and other Shona dialects but the Ndau would traditionally call elopement *kufohla*.

**Noel** narrated that he had to pay *roora* after his wife had come to his home through *kufohla*: “Yes, I know them [the different forms of Ndau marriage]. I just, after we agreed with her father, sent people who went to pay *roora* after she had come (*kufohla*) and we have been staying together until now.”

## **1.1.2 Mutimba**

### **1.1.2.1 Mutimba refers to celebration of the marriage**

*Mutimba* is a method of celebrating a marriage. In other words, marriage will already have been constituted when *kubvunzira* (marriage negotiations) have been concluded and *roora* is paid. **Theme 2** will expound this topic.

**Ronald** expressed it as follows: *“Mutimba is a method of celebrating what will already have happened.”*

#### **1.1.2.2 How *mutimba* takes place**

As already established, *mutimba* will only take place after *kubvunzira* has been completed and *roora* (at least part of it) has been paid.

**Ronald** explained that: *“The girl will then be accompanied to the man’s home (at a later date) ... that is when the celebration called mutimba will be done. That is when the festivities will be. Relatives gather and the rituals are performed.”*

**Pretty** expressed this as follows: *“The son in law will have paid roora ... so the girl’s relatives arrange to take her to her husband’s home. That is when mutimba is done. She is accompanied to her husband’s home in a very good way. When they get there there will be ululations as she is received into the husband’s family.”*

The aforementioned agrees with what Gelfand (1977: 49) argues that, “... the girl’s father asks his sister (the *vatete*) to take his daughter to her husband. He tells his wife and the aunt to brew beer and prepare millet meal, a fowl and a calabash of oil (*chinu*). When everything is ready the paternal uncle (*babamudiki*), the paternal aunt (*vatete*) and the younger maternal aunt (*amainini*) go with the girl to her husband’s village, taking with them the fowl, a basket of meal, the calabash of oil and two pots of beer.” As has been remarked earlier the paternal aunt plays a very significant role in marriage related issues among the Ndau.

The fact that the bride is not supposed to go empty handed is further endorsed by Ngundu (2010: 21, 180), who adds that “the handing over ceremony normally involves only the paternal aunts and sisters of the bride who would take the bride late in the

evening to the groom's house (her parents would normally be excluded from the rituals) ...".

### 1.1.3 *Kutizisa mukumbo*

Although *kutizira* and *kutizisa* both refer to 'eloping' in English, as remarked earlier on the two terms can be distinguished in either Shona or Ndaou. *Kutizisa mukumbo* would signify that the man is the one who is causing the woman to flee whereas *kutiza mukumbo* would denote that the girl flees to the man on her own initiative. In every day usage, the two terms are used as synonyms among the Ndaou.

#### 1.1.3.1 *Kutiza mukumbo is the same as kutizira; a girl fleeing to the man's home*

**Rudo** and **Tapuwa** both mentioned the fact that the girl would flee or would be caused to flee to her man's home.

**Rudo** observed that in *kutizira*: *"The girl just goes to the man's home."*

**Tapuwa** referred to the same phenomenon but unlike **Rudo** calls it *kutizisa mukumbo*: *"the girl flees to his home, she flees. That's kutizisa mukumbo."*

Elopements were and are still a very important aspect of Ndaou traditional marriages. Holleman (1952: 114) acknowledges this and mentions that "elopements afford an effective means of reaching a speedy marriage agreement in cases of emergency due to the girl's premature pregnancy." In a sense, elopement marriages are marriages of 'convenience'. They are pragmatic methods of dealing with a present challenge, be it unplanned pregnancy or lack of money for *roora*. *Roora* in such marriages will come only later, after the two involved will have lived together for a while.

#### 1.1.3.2 *How kutiza mukumbo takes place*

The following participants gave accounts of how elopements were carried out.

**Rudo** responded: *"Yes, she flees from home and goes to her man's home. They will look for her at her home. Some men will send someone with money to just inform her*

parents that he is with her (*tsvakiraikuno* literally means ‘search here’). Once that money is paid, the man will be preparing to pay more money now for *roora*, or to marry officially.”

**Ronald** had this to say about *kutizisa mukumbo*: “It is a way of getting married. A young man meets a girl that he loves. They fall in love and agree that the girl flees to his home and she flees. That’s *kutizisa mukumbo*. Later, maybe with one or two children already, that is when the man will go formally to pay *roora*.”

**Nyasha** acknowledged the fact that the man could initiate the elopement process when she remarked: “Some fall in love and agree to live together. The boy takes the girl to his house and they start living together. That’s it. They build their family that way. [They will never go to the parents] Only when he is ready to pay *roora* will he come out to say he was the one who had the in-laws’ daughter all this time... He will have taken his girl a long time ago. [They (participants in the focus group) all spoke together in agreement saying yes this is *kutizisa*].”

**Dakarai** explained in detail: “The other one is when a girl agrees to a man’s proposal. The man will not be having any money and an agreement is reached between him and the girl for the girl to come to the man’s place. She will run away from home and go to the man’s home where she will sit outside the houses. She will be asked who she wants and she will say by name who she will have come for. In this case the girl will come without her parents’ knowledge. They will be given a message later for them to know where their daughter is. The man will send someone to inform the girl’s parents that he is with their daughter and that the man is looking for money to pay for *roora*. Then the man will look for money even a little amount to formally inform the girl’s parents that the man has their daughter. This is done so that should the daughter be sick or anything that happens, the parents will be in the know about her whereabouts.”

Whether one uses the term *kutizisa* or *kutizira* or *kutiza mukumbo* the manner in which the girl goes to the man’s home is more or less the same. As already established, *roora* will only be paid later in such a marriage. Although it may not have been the most preferred way of marrying among the Ndau it was and remains a prevalent one because it is pragmatic in challenging circumstances, as stated earlier.

#### **1.1.4 Kuganha**

This marriage practice has died down among the Ndau.

##### **1.1.4.1 Kuganha means the girl (or young woman) goes to the man's home**

This form of marriage was meant for young women who loved a man who did not seem to notice them. Such young women would just appear unannounced at the man's home.

**Kumbirai** explained *kuganha* as follows: *"Kuganha is a girl who loves a boy and tries all she can to let the boy know she loves him but he does not see it. The boy ignores her. So, she packs her things and goes to the boy's house."*

Chitakure (2016: 38-39) indicates that "*kuganha* literally means to impose oneself upon another particularly for marriage purposes. It was done by a girl who would have loved someone for a long time, and would have tried to entice the man in question, in many different ways, without succeeding ...". Chitakure (2016: 38) actually observes that some scholars would like to think of *kuganha* as "the female equivalent of *musengabere*". It appears therefore as if the issue of imposing oneself on another was not only the preserve of men as far as marriages were concerned.

##### **1.1.4.2 How kuganha takes place**

**Kumbirai** further explained that: *"she comes on her own without anyone accompanying her. When she arrives she sits where ashes are thrown away in the boy's yard. In the morning when the boy's sisters go to throw ashes away they would find her there. She will be covering herself with a white cloth. So they will know she loves someone in the family. They will ask her who she loves and she will say the name of the boy. The boy could not refuse because what pushed her to leave her home to come to your place is love for you. So there was no need to refuse to take her. That is kuganha."*



**Yeukai** put this in the following words: *“The girl wants to get married but the man is not proactive. The girl takes her bag, on her own, and goes to the man’s home. She goes there and says she has come for him (ndatotizira). She won’t be pregnant but she won’t be satisfied with the man’s progress with the matter. That is the third way.”*

In line with the above, Chitakure (2016: 39) comments that: “The process was simple. The concerned woman would just pack her belongings and go to the home of the relatives of the man that she loved, and she would then demand the boy’s hand in marriage ...”. All this needs to be understood in the Shona and/or Ndau context in which everyone was expected to marry. As such, there were different ways to make sure this occurred.

Shoko (2007: 27) describes his understanding of *kuganha*. He asserts that, “In a similar kind of marriage [similar to *musengabere*, just as Chitakure states above] a girl can marry a boy without prearrangement. The marriage is called *kuganha*. She identifies the man of her choice and heads to his home straightaway. No one resists her efforts. The man is expected to comply and marry her... A husband or wife is a precious gift from the ancestors and must not be resisted.”

*Kuganha*, as was stated earlier, has died out. Only older participants could recall the practice and how it used to happen. It has become extinct, so that the younger generation of participants have not experienced it.

### **1.1.5 *Musengabere***

This form has also significantly died down in Chimanimani although it is said to be still practiced in border areas with Mozambique and in Mozambique itself.

#### **1.1.5.1 *Musengabere* means abducting the girl**

*Musengabere* literally had to do with carrying a girl or a woman that one loved home, with or without her consent.

**Kumbirai** explained the practice in these words: *“Bere is a hyena. It is a stubborn animal. So, she will also be stubborn that is why she is likened to a hyena... trying to be stubborn by refusing when I love her.”*

**Kumbirai** added: *“So, you grab her ... and carry her to your home.”*

According to Vijfhuizen (2002: 22) *musengabere* signifies ‘to carry a hyena and run away with it’. In *musengabere*, a man kidnaps a girl and takes her to his place. She points out that it is a forced marriage. It is because of this ‘kidnapping’ aspect that Chitakure (2016: 38) calls *musengabere* ‘kidnapping marriages’.

#### **1.1.5.2 The love and consent may or not be mutual in *musengabere***

**Kumbirai, Edwin, Patrick and Godfrey** expressed different views about *musengabere*.

**Kumbirai** maintained that the girl’s consent was not an issue when he averred that: *“Musengabere is in a case where a man loves a girl but the girl does not love him ...”*

**Edwin** suggested that although the girl was seemingly forcibly carried away she would have agreed to be carried off: *“Musengabere is where a man would go and agree with a girl ...”*

**Partrick** was not too sure if the woman had to consent or not. He responded that: *“musengabere, I do not remember if they had to fall in love first.”*

**Godfrey** was definitive when he stated that: *“No, there is no need [for the girl to agree]. The girl can be carried if the man loves her. This has nothing to do with her agreeing.”*

On the whole, *musengabere* is widely believed to have been a forcible affair and to have warranted no consent from the woman involved at all. As shall be seen later in this study, the forceful elements in some of the Ndau ways of marriage would not have any place in a postcolonial hybrid context.

#### 1.1.5.3 How *musengabere* takes place

The participants narrated how *musengabere* was acted out.

- **The girl is abducted and taken to the man's home and remains at the man's home**

First, the girl or the woman was carried to the man's home.

**Mary** explained: *"Musengabere is when a boy wants a girl that he loves. He grabs and carries her to his place."*

**Tapuwa** said: *"A man would find a girl that he loved and would carry her home. He would run away with her, that's musengabere. Then she will become his wife."*

**Edwin** maintained there was agreement, responding: *"Musengabere is where a man would go and agree with a girl where they will meet. When they meet he would take her to his home..., it had some force in it. The man would carry the girl but she would be knowing [she would be aware] anyway that this is what was going to happen. She was somehow forced and then goes to the man's home."*

**Godfrey** stated that: *"A man sees a girl that he loves and carries her to his home. No one will follow her."*

**Kumbirai** added: *"So, you grab her ... and carry her to your home. When you get to your home you put her in your house. According to tradition she will not go out, she now belongs there. It ends when she enters the man's yard."*

**Godfrey** emphasised the force associated with *musengabere*, in commenting that: *"they [girls] can be caught on their way to school. The parents will look for their child and then they will hear she was taken through musengabere."*

Chitakure (2016: 38) concurs with the manner in which *musengabere* was conducted as stated above. He mentions that the girl would be ambushed as she would be going to fetch some water or to the bush to fetch some firewood. In some cases she would

just be led by the hand to the man's home but if she resisted, she would literally be carried there.

Missionaries disapproved of the use of force in Ndaou marriage practices but they unfortunately likewise failed to recognise and appreciate the positive aspects of Ndaou marriage forms. They wanted the colonised to mimic them (Bhabha, 1994 [1983]: 668; Kennedy, 2008: 118). To reiterate, this is what has caused the problem of duplication of marriages among the Ndaou.

- **Parents are notified**

Second, the girl or the woman's parents had to be informed at some stage about the whereabouts of their daughter.

**Joyce** implicitly mentioned this when she said: *"[musengabere], the girl cannot go back to visit her parents before they are formally informed by the boy's family that they have their daughter. Even if she sees them coming towards her direction say on a path she will have to avoid them."*

**Godfrey** explicitly stated that: *"The man's family will send someone to the girl's family just to inform them that their daughter is with them. So, she will have been taken that way, through musengabere..."*

*Musengabere* can therefore be said to have been a pragmatic way of becoming married for a man who might have failed to catch the attention of the girl that he loved. Chitakure (2016: 38) mentions that this form of marriage helped unlikable men to marry the women they loved. As was mentioned earlier, *roora* would follow in this form of marriage just as in any other. Chitakure is of the view that *musengabere* was only performed by men from wealthy families who could afford to pay heavy penalties when they eventually had to pay *roora* but my understanding is that it was open to anyone in society to utilise.

- **Formalities are completed later**

Third, unlike in *kubvunzira* where formalities would be carried out at the beginning, here formalities would be dealt with at a later stage.

**Tapuwa** asserted that: *“Formalities will also be done later but he will have run away with her.”*

**Edwin** noted that: *“[issues about kuteya would be arranged later], later after she will have already come.... The go-betweens (vanyai) would then go with money for roora.”*

**Patrick** concurred with the above, indicating: *“musengabere... Paying roora would be arranged later ...”*

As stated above, the formalities that will have been skipped at the beginning would follow the ‘kidnapping’ but not necessarily shortly afterwards. What would normally be done shortly after the girl was carried away would be just to inform her parents, through a *munyai* (a go-between) about the whereabouts of the girl.

#### **1.1.5.4 Views on prevalence of *musengabere* differ**

The participants held different views as far as *musengabere* was concerned.

**Fungai** mentioned that the term itself was not originally Nda, declaring: *“Musengabere is Zezuru, I would not know what it was in Nda....: If it was among the Nda as well it had a different name.”*

**Farai** alluded to the fact that the practice had died down among the Nda: *“There is kutema ugariri, and then there is kuzvarira, musengabere (both laugh). We do not hear a lot about these but we hear they were used back then. Yes. [They seem to be dead now]”*

**Dakarai** concurred with Farai and asserted that: *“Then there is another one that the Nda do not normally use... musengabere. But it is not common among the Nda. I think this used to happen long ago. Nowadays we just hear that there was this way of*

*getting married. (Although this is no longer common) I would say it still happens to a less extent.”*

**Godfrey**, on the contrary, stated that the practice was still very much alive: *“No [the laws of Zimbabwe cannot do anything to curb this], it is a culture. It is acceptable among the Ndaus [is a culture in the Ndaus people’s ways] and no one reports it. It is affecting school girls a lot.”*

**Sarah** believed the practice was now predominantly still alive in Mozambique. She asserted that: *“This is a serious problem in Mozambique. They are also Ndaus just like us.”*

**Godfrey** concurred with Sarah’s sentiments but added that: *“musengabere ... it has died down but still practised in border areas with Mozambique like ... It is being used a lot especially when the men who will have gone to work in South Africa will have returned.”*

Just like *kuganha*, only the older participants knew much about *musengabere*. It has been forced into extinction for the reasons that the study will give later on.

#### **1.1.6. Kutizira**

Elopement has been mentioned before in this chapter, especially regarding its relationship to *roora*.

##### **1.1.6.1. Various words *kutizira*, *kufohla* and *dorwa* are used to refer to more or less the same happening**

As has already been established, the Ndaus use several words to refer to eloping or elopement.

**John** observed: *“But there are other ways like kutizira but in pure Ndaus it was called kufohla.”*

**John** added that: *“Yes, they {Kutizira and kufohla} are the same because the girl that flees to the man normally would be pregnant.”*

**John** maintained that *kutizira* and *kufohla* were one and the same thing, stating: “*She would leave for the man’s home that is what is called kutiza (fleeing) in Shona but in Ndaou it is kufohla.*”

**John** alluded to the fact that *kufohla* was derived from Nguni languages, buttressing the connection between the Ndaou and the Nguni as Chapter 3 demonstrated. He responded: “*The Ndaou used Nguni words (ChiNguni) so it is kufohla.*”

**Salome** mentioned *kutizira* and *kutizisa* as terms that one may use interchangeably. She said: “[*kutizisa*], *there is kutizira ...*”

**Pretty** concurred with **Salome**, indicating that: “*Kutizisa and kutizira are the same.*”

**Vimbai** also put the two terms together and said: “*Kutizisa yes or kutizira perhaps...*”

**Fungai** added that: “*Yes, [dorwa and kutizira] they are the same.*”

As has been noted earlier, elopements are quite popular among the Ndaou. Fiedler (1998: 50) comments that marriage by eloping has become the rule in many areas, in particular mentioning Northeastern Zaire and Kenya. This suggests that elopements are prevalent in Chimanimani, in Zimbabwe and in many parts of Africa. Part of the reasons for this pervasiveness, according to Fiedler (1998: 50), is “because of the tremendous bride price (*roora*) in many areas.” The coming of missionaries and settlers, therefore, introduced new dynamics to the Ndaou’s marriage patterns. Capitalist tendencies that are associated with Western lifestyles have crept in and, in the process, caused *roora* to become exorbitant. This is a major challenge that the Ndaou are faced with in Chimanimani today. Hence the proliferation of elopement marriages as Fiedler suggests above.

Ngundu (2010: 26) calls marriage by elopement ‘a less ideal custom of establishing what would eventually become a valid union’ while Bhebhe (1995: 62) asserts that “elopement was usually a form of parental arm twisting used to speed up the negotiation process”. It naturally follows that a young couple who do not have money

for *roora* and who cannot start marriage negotiations without any money would find this way of getting married to be very pragmatic and very attractive.

#### **1.1.6.2 *Kutizira* refers to a pregnant girl going to the man's home**

Elopements are usually associated with pregnant girls or women who flee from their parents' homes to the homes of their boyfriends.

**John** alluded to this: *"Yes, they [Kutizira and kufohla] are the same because the girl that flees to the man normally would be pregnant."*

**Godfrey** put it this way: *"The other way is kutizisa. A man falls in love with a girl and sometimes gets involved sexually with her. The next thing is they will be staying together. Yes [the man] will take her to his home, that's kutizisa."*

**Kumbirai** concurred with **John's** sentiments, stating that: *"Then there is kutizisa. Kutizisa, here the boy and the girl agree. Normally the girl will be pregnant."*

**Dakarai** responded: *"Kutizisa happens when the girl is pregnant. Here, the two fall in love and the man takes the girl away and lives with her. Her family and other people will learn later that he has taken her. There is a slight difference with kutizira."*

**Tapuwa** concurred with the above-mentioned, declaring that: *"There was also kutizira. A girl would be pregnant and then she will go to the responsible man's home. It is another way of getting married."*

**Dakarai** categorically stated that: *"Kutizira happens when the girl is pregnant."*

**Salome** also mentioned that: *"[kutizisa, there is kutizira] Kutizira is when she is already pregnant."*

According to Janhi (1970: 36), if the girl was pregnant before *roora* was paid then the man responsible for the pregnancy was supposed to take her to his home without the parents' knowledge. They would agree on a meeting place and the girl would leave at



night, making sure she would not attract anybody's attention. She would collect her belongings, sometimes with one of her friends, taking them to the rendezvous. The boy, who would have already told his parents and relatives, would take her to his home.

What is called elopement in this chapter, Ngundu (2010: 27) suggests, is to be differentiated from 'flight marriage'. According to Ngundu (2010: 27), marriage by elopement was different from the latter ("to run away to someone") because the latter was marriage by pre-marital impregnation. While the girl could be escorted by a friend or an aunt in elopement, in flight marriage the girl ran away "unescorted and presented herself to the family of her lover as a prospective bride." Ngundu (2010: 27) terms the latter act "almost one of desperation." It should be noted, however, that this distinction is not categorically clear among the Ndau of Chimanimani, Zimbabwe. Elopement and flight marriage mean one and the same thing to the Ndau.

#### **1.1.6.3 There are various ways that the pregnant girl goes to the man's home**

The participants mentioned that the pregnant girl would go to the responsible man in one of several possible scenarios. First, she could be taken there by her aunt(s). As already emphasised earlier, the 'aunts' refers to her paternal aunts. Second, she could go alone. Third, she could go alone but her aunt(s) would follow up on her. Fourth, she could be driven away from home while, lastly, the man could take her to his home.

- **She is taken by aunt(s)**

**Yeukai** responded that: *"the boy and the girl will have had sex and she gets pregnant. So the girl will come in the evening with her aunt. They arrive and say tiri vepano (we belong here). The boy's family will inquire further on the meaning of that and then the aunt will say we have brought your wife, she is pregnant."*

**Kumbirai** expressed it in this fashion: *"Kutizisa, here the boy and the girl agree. Normally the girl will be pregnant. They agree on a day the girl should elope. She can come with an aunt who accompanies her."*

**Fungai** asserted that: *“Yes [with matorwa/dorwa only two people would accompany them]. She will be pregnant already.”*

**Edwin** had this to say: *“in some cases the man would have impregnated the girl while she was still at her parents’ place. If it were to happen this way she would come with her aunts into the man’s family. The aunts will say they had brought munhu wenyu (your person). They would go on to say she knew a boy in the family. So the boy/ man would be called and asked if he knew this woman/girl. He would agree that he knew her and that she was his girlfriend. Then there would be ululations and the aunts will be dancing, serious dancing, until they will be welcomed and ushered into the house where celebrations will be done the following morning. This was another way of getting married. This is what is called kutizira.”*

**Anesu** answered: *“when someone finds that she is pregnant, through the aunt or a relative they inform the people or they just go and then they will go and sit kunze kwemusha (outside the yard), that is kutizira. When... they are seen sitting there they will be invited or they are asked who they are and what they are there for. After inquiring some might receive you, some these days they don’t receive you. It all depends on the family. Then after reception they ask who you are and then there are certain steps that are taken like planning to go and pay lobola to the in-laws.”*

In line with the above, it is important to mention that kinship ties were and remain very important among the Ndau of Chimanimani. When one talk of *roora* being paid this was effected in the presence of kinsmen and women, not just paid to the parents as some may want to believe. It is in this context that paternal aunts were and are still very useful in Ndau marriages. Regarding kinship ties, Vijfhuizen (2002: 18-19) indicates that the most crucial kinship concepts among the Ndau would be clan (*mutupo*), patrilineal extended group (*dzinza*), and family (*mhuri*). A Ndau individual would view and understand himself or herself in the context of his/her family, patrilineal extended group and clan. It is for this very reason that the family and extended group were involved in rites of passage concerning a certain member of any of these.

As Vijfhuizen (2002: 18) indicates, “clans refer to totemic groups who identify themselves by distinctive totems (mitupo), which ... are a part of ethnic identity.” Clans and totems were discussed extensively in Chapter 3. These were and remain very important among the Ndau. The paternal aunts and uncles make sure that one does not marry someone from the same clan or totem as his or hers.

- **She goes alone**

**John** mentioned that the girl could go alone: *“Yes, they [kutizira and kufohla] are the same because the girl that flees to the man normally would be pregnant. She would already have been pregnant without the knowledge of the parents on both sides. She could no longer continue to stay with her parents because of the pregnancy. She would ...”*

**Rudo** concurred, responding: *“It may be because she will have fallen pregnant so it is because she will have seen that it is no longer possible to continue staying with her parents. So she goes to the person who impregnated her. It may also be because of unpleasant living conditions at her home. She will have considered it better to go have her own home with her husband.”*

**Edwin** also averred that the girl could go alone: *“What is different is that nowadays the girl just goes by herself without being accompanied and the celebrations in some cases are not even done. This is what is called kutizira today.”*

**Tapuwa** added: *“There was also kutizira. A girl would be pregnant and then she will go to the responsible man’s home.”*

Although in previous times it was more appropriate for the girl to go with her paternal aunt, more and more nowadays because of the breakdown of patrilineal extended groups or family ties the girl finds herself having to go on her own.

- **She goes alone but the aunt(s) follow up**

**Prisca** mentioned the fact that the girl could go alone but the aunt(s) would follow up. She put this as follows: *“Sometimes the girl just goes unaccompanied. The aunts will then make follow-ups. It depends with the situation. It depends again with the relationship that the girl has with the aunt. Otherwise, if the relationship is not that good the girl just goes alone.”*

The fact that the girl could go by herself, with nothing more than follow-ups being carried out on her, demonstrates that Ndau marriages were conducted in diverse forms. Some of the elements differed from family to family and from clan to clan.

- **She is driven away from home**

**Eric** asserted that the girl could be driven away from home: *“Yes ... by causing a young woman pregnant by a man or young man with whom she was in love. In this case the girl is driven away from the home of her parents. That happened to my half-sister and she had to be driven away.”*

**Eric** added that: *“Yah {other reasons that cause elopement}, the girl may fail to come home in good time (coming after dusk). She, in such cases, can be asked to go back where she was. By so doing she goes to the boy’s home..., this is still called kutizira.... Sometimes they can be seen walking together and then she is asked to go to the home of the man she was walking with.”*

It was widely known and accepted that a girl could be driven away from home for these and other reasons. However, in numerous cases the girl would leave on her own once she realised she had committed a violation of some sort to avoid being expelled from home. Such a way of solving matters would also not fit the postcolonial hybrid context well. In such a setting the rights of the girl or the woman are to be respected and she cannot be driven away from home at the whim of the father.

- **The man takes her to his home**

**Dakarai** declared that the man could take her to his home: *“Kutizira happens when the girl is pregnant. Here, the two fall in love and the man takes the girl away and lives with her.”*

**Godfrey** concurred: *“Yes {the man will take her to his home, that’s kutizisa.”*

As has already been mentioned above *kutizira* is still very prevalent among the Ndaup people of Chimanimani. This Ndaup marriage forms help to solve social problems in a hybrid context. In the face of financial challenges and in the realisation that a couple do not have money for *roora*, *kutizira* is evoked as a convenient solution to the problem. Only later will *roora* be paid. In this sense, it can be argued that the Ndaup of Chimanimani continue to redefine and reinterpret their marriage practices in the light of prevailing circumstances.

#### **1.1.6.4 How *kutizira* takes place**

- ***Kutizisa* takes place at night**

It has already been reported, in this chapter, that elopements take place either in the evening or at night.

**Juliet** referred to this: *“Even kutizisa is not done during the day but during the night. In kutizisa the girl would make a sound (like coughing) while outside the man’s yard so that she would be noticed. The man’s family may also be expecting someone to arrive because in some cases the man will have informed the aunts. When people hear the coughing sound they will then check to see who coughed outside.”*

Both Ngundu (2010: 21) and Fiedler (1998: 50) remark that eloping takes place in the evening.

- **Girl’s parents are informed**

The parents would be informed about the whereabouts of their daughter shortly after she had eloped.

**Eunice** mentioned that: *“the expectation is that the girl’s parents should be informed within a short period of time so that they may not be worried [about her whereabouts]...Taking too long before informing the girl’s parents is failing.”*

**Eunice’s** sentiments above state the ideal but, in reality, some would-be sons-in-law spend years without sending any word to the girl’s parents. It is in such cases that, when eventually the son-in-law wants to pay *roora*, he will be fined heavily for keeping the in-laws’ daughter for a long time without informing them. Should it happen that the daughter passes on without the parents being informed about her whereabouts, the man who was living with her would be in serious trouble. In some cases, the woman’s parents would refuse to be involved in their daughter’s burial, making it very difficult for the man and his family to bury the corpse without the deceased’s relatives being present.

- ***Roora is paid***

As already established, *roora* will still need to be paid even though *kubvunzira* had been dispensed with at the beginning.

Ngundu (2010: 27), it will be recalled, records that an intermediary would be sent to the girl’s family with a small item a few days after the girl eloped. The token would convey to the girl’s family that the man who has their daughter intends to marry her and that marriage negotiations and *roora* would follow.

***Kutizira may be before or after roora has been paid***

**Anesu** mentioned that *kutizira* could occur before or after *roora* has been paid. She said: *“Kutizira is when somebody has been impregnated that is, can be before the son in law to be has been to the in-laws or it can be even after... the roora is paid.”*

The girl could be impregnated after *roora* was paid because she would have had to stay with her parents for a long time as her ‘husband’ was preparing for a church wedding. This is a major challenge that the expectation to have a church wedding

poses for the Ndau. It forces some Ndau Christians to wait for protracted periods as they try to raise money for the 'white wedding'.

***Roora is paid after kutizira: the girl is already living with the husband***

**Edwin** emphasised the point that *roora* would still need to be paid in *kutizira* cases. He averred: *"Yes [issues about kuteya would be arranged later], later after she will have already come. Same applies with the kutizira way described above; the kuteya would be done later. The go-betweens (vanyai) would then go with money for roora."*

**Paida** concurred with **Edwin**: *"There are cases in which the man will come later to pay roora."*

**Tapuwa** also mentioned that: *"kutizira.... Then the formalities would be done later but she will already be married."*

The pragmatic method (*kutizira/kutizisa*) was only meant to speed up the process of marriage. It did not in any way mean that the usual negotiations and payment of *roora* had been completely set aside. All those who used this Ndau way of getting married knew very well (and still know today) that they are expected to fulfil the normal marriage expectations.

- ***Roora may not be paid***

As has been mentioned above, some prospective sons-in-law never turned up to pay *roora*.

**Paida** alluded to this: *"There are cases in which the man will come later to pay roora and there are others in which the girl goes and never comes back (and no roora is paid)."*

Although the above-mentioned would sometimes happen, it was never encouraged and it was not an acceptable practice.

- ***How the roora takes place with kutizira***

We have already seen that *roora* would be paid later after *kutizira*.

**Eunice** stated that: “Yes, *[here again roora will only be paid when the husband is ready] that is when they will pay roora. A small amount is taken initially to just inform the girl’s parents that you have their daughter. Some say even a bucket of maize can be taken to the girl’s parents to inform them so that should anything happen to their daughter you can approach and talk to them.*”

**Anesu** also answered: “... *pay(ing) lobola [roora] to the in-laws. [After the pregnant woman has already been accepted into the family] ... it might take a while ... Preparing money and pfuma, what they will use.... Some may go straight away others may need to prepare and then they will visit the in-laws. ... that will be including paying money for ‘damages’. ... What I mean by damage is, the in-laws will say you took our child I would say ‘through the window’ ...Yaah, she was a virgin maybe I would say and then because of that you need to pay ‘damage’. After you are ready with ‘damage’ and everything is in place some might go back straight away because they will be having the money and then they pay for the damages and all requirements: matekenyandebvu, mombe dzechumai, danga in the form of money or in the form of cattle.*”

Establishing and maintaining contact with the girl’s parents and or family was encouraged. As has been stated earlier a man was not supposed to stay with somebody’s daughter for a long time without informing her people about the girl’s whereabouts. This was the conventional way of doing things among the Ndaui of Chimanimani. Anything to the contrary was a deviation from the norm.

- ***Kutizira is without mutimba***

It was clear from the participants’ responses that *mutimba* (as in or after *kubvunzira*) is not performed in *kutizira* cases.

**Pretty** stated that: “*kutizira is a way without mutimba. So, in this case they will have paid roora but there is no gathering money for the wedding.*”



It would appear therefore as if *kutizira* was not as widely celebrated as *kubvunzira*. The former may have been more prevalent then and today but it remains a pragmatic method that is not necessarily the most preferred among the Ndaus.

#### **1.1.7 *Kugarwa nhaka* – man marrying a widow of brother, is no longer practiced**

Apart from the forms of Ndaus marriage mentioned earlier, *kugarwa nhaka* was said to have been a Ndaus marriage form as well. However, it was said to have died down. The current study gives reasons why in a postcolonial context some of the Ndaus marriage practices have died out.

**Dakarai** mentioned that: *“[ on the question of if ways like kuzvarira, kugarwa nhaka, and others are no longer used] They are not frequently used but they are still used especially in cases say my brother dies, his wife who was already married and is in the husband’s family perhaps with just one child, if I have potential to take care of my brother’s wife, we the Ndaus can marry several women, the brother’s wife will decide whether she wants to stay with her late husband’s family or wants to go back to her family. If she wants to stay she will be given to her late husband’s brother who is expected to take care of her. So I can take her (kugara nhaka) and take care of her. The children that will be born will be said to be my brother’s children.”*

According to Mair (1969: x) widow inheritance is a custom under which a widow is expected to cohabit with one of her deceased husband’s kinsmen. This practice was part of the Jewish culture as can be seen in the Hebrew Bible. Guy (2004: 85), himself a white man, asserts that “Ordinarily the bond of marriage continues after the death of one of the spouses. If the husband dies, his brother will sometimes take his wife in levirate marriage, a practice parallel to that of the Hebrew Bible (Dt 25.5f).” Vijfhuizen (2002: 22) calls this type of marriage ‘levirate’ or *kuga(r)wanhaka*.

#### **1.1.8 *Kuzvarira* widower marrying wife’s brother’s daughter is no longer practiced**

A widower could also marry his deceased wife’s brother’s daughter. This practice has also fallen away, for reasons that will be given later in this chapter.

**Pretty** responded: *“Kuzvarira, I think, it is when a man’s wife dies. He will then be given a daughter to his late wife’s brother as a wife.”*

**Farai** declared that kuzvarira and other forms of Ndau marriage had died out: *“There is kutema ugariri, and then there is kuzvarira, musengabere (both laugh). We do not hear a lot about these but we hear they were used back then. Yes. [They seem to be dead now].”*

Mair (1969: x), in connection with the practice mentioned above, states that a sororate is a custom which imposes on the kinsmen of a barren or deceased wife an obligation to provide another woman to make good the deficiency or loss.

Vijfhuizen (2002: 22) observes that *“kuzvarira or kuputswa implies that a poor family, who has difficulties to maintain themselves, gives a very young daughter to a family who will provide bridewealth, which enables them to survive.”* She adds that the girl is given away in marriage to the family she married into if she is mature but young; if the father of that family is too elderly she will be given to his son. Here Vijfhuizen treats *kuzvarira* and *kuputswa* as one and the same thing but my participants mentioned them as two different forms of Ndau marriage. In practice, among the Ndau of Chimanimani, the two are two different marriage forms.

#### **1.1.9 Kugara mapfiwa widower marrying wife’s sister**

A widower could also marry his deceased or elderly wife’s sister. *Kugara mapfiwa* literally refers to the issue of replacing the deceased sister. This custom was also said to be declining if not already dead.

**Taurai** mentioned it as follows: *“I need to add another one. Say a wife dies, her young sister can be asked to go live with the sister’s husband. Kugara mapfiwa.”*

**Tapuwa** concurred with the above: *“Yes, kugara mapfiwa. A man will have lost a wife and then he is given the wife’s younger sister as his wife.”*

According to Vijfhuizen (2002: 22) *kugara mapfiwa* literally means to 'inherit the fireplace'. She calls the form of marriage *chimutsa mapfiwa*, literally 'to keep the fire burning'. When a man's wife died, her sister or the daughter of the deceased wife's brother would be given to the husband to replace the deceased. Westernisation challenged all such practices that would imply forcing young girls into marriages with or without their consent. This thesis maintains that there was nothing wrong in weeding out elements that infringed on the girls' human rights and dignity. What was wrong was the failure to appreciate every other aspect of Ndaou marriage practices, irrespective of how good or bad they may have been.

*Kugarwa nhaka*, *kuzvarira* and *kugara mapfiwa* have died out too. Although young participants know and could explain what they were all about, the fact is that only the old folk could attest to have witnessed any marriages conducted under such marriage forms.

#### **1.1.10 *Kuriga mutanda***

This Ndaou marriage form was used in cases where a family wanted to book or make a deposit for a newly born baby girl so that when she grows up they would take her as a wife. In some cases, the deposit was paid for the baby before she was even born.

##### **1.1.10.1 *Kuriga mutanda* refers to claiming a baby girl for marriage to a son in the future**

*Kuriga mutanda* literally means 'dropping a log'. That log was a claim symbol.

**Godfrey** recounted what would occur: "*What happens is, when a girl child is born the family that wants to marry her brings a log and drops it in the yard (kuriga mutanda) where the child will have been born. This is a sign of claiming this baby girl. It is a security deposit. [Meaning the girl will grow up already known to be given in marriage to that family that brought a log].*"

**Evans** mentioned the purpose of 'dropping the log' as follows: "*Because kuriga mutanda was just a claim symbol.*"

**Simba** differentiated between *roora* payment and this claim symbol in these words:  
*“No. [The log was not payment in itself].”*

This marriage form further substantiates the assertion that the Ndaui had a rich and complex marriage system. Claiming a child at birth or just after birth like this would mean that the opinion of the girl child herself did not matter. This is what the postcolonial hybrid context would seek to redress. It gives voice to those once oppressed and allows them to speak on their own behalf.

**1.1.10.2 In *kuriga mutanda* the choice of girl was because the family was from the same community, they liked the family or to appease the spirit of a male killed by a relative of the girl**

**John** narrated how the choice of the girl came about: *“After a girl child will have been born in the village, a family that had a son would admire and wish their son could marry from that family because they liked the family.”*

**Eric** mentioned that the girl was chosen so as to: *“... appease the spirit of a male man who was killed without cause by the relative of the girl several or many years ago.”*

It should be emphasised that marrying a girl or woman from the vicinity (*kuroorana vematongo*) was strongly encouraged among the Ndaui. The man's family preferred to know the family from which the girl was to come from. Depositing a log as in this case was a good way of guaranteeing exactly that.

**1.1.10.3 *Kuriga mutanda* is done before or after a girl child's birth**

As stated earlier, the claim symbol was paid before or after the girl was born.

**Eric** commented: *“Kuriga mutanda while the child is still unborn and assuming the child will be a girl. To say the child who is to be born here if it is a girl it will be mine.”*

**Eric** added: *“Yes, before the child was born, but also sometimes after the child had been born.”*

**John** reported that: *“After a girl child will have been born in the village, a family that had a son would admire and wish their son could marry from that family because they liked the family. They would then make sort of a deposit or a down-payment.”*

As has already been mentioned, *kuriga mutanda* would be carried out before or after the girl child had been born. In either cases it is evident that the infant’s opinion did not matter. She would grow up only to be given to the family that had deposited a log for her. Such a practice, just like the other practices mentioned earlier, would not be acceptable in a postcolonial hybrid context.

#### **1.1.10.4 The log can be deposited by a father, mother or any other woman in the boy’s family**

**Simba** remarked that: *“a father who liked that family (from that same community) would go drop a log (kuriga mutanda) as a sign of claiming that baby girl ...”*

**John** reported: *“the way of depositing was that the boy’s mother would go fetch firewood or any other woman in the boy’s family.”*

As established from the participants’ responses, the log could be deposited or dropped by almost anyone from the man’s family. It could be a father, mother or any other woman from that family. It is worth noting that this practice too, having died away a long time ago, was only mentioned by the elderly, those above 70 years. The younger participants would not have witnessed any marriage of this form.

#### **1.1.10.5 How *kuriga mutanda* was done**

Details were given about how the practice was carried out.

**John** narrated: *“the way of depositing was that the boy’s mother would go fetch firewood or any other woman in the boy’s family. The firewood or just a log would be*

*taken to the newly born baby's family where it will be dropped in the yard outside the huts where firewood was kept. After dropping the firewood or the log the woman would then sit down and then start talking saying we have come and that we are happy with what has happened here (the girl's birth). (Both laugh). We would want to marry your daughter. This was another way of Ndaou marriage."*

The practice was a well established Ndaou form of marriage and it was valued and respected just like any other such marriage. From a postcolonial hybrid perspective, however, such a marriage would justifiably be said to be exploitative and unsustainable.

#### **1.1.10.6 *Kuriga mutanda* was accepted Ndaou tradition that is still practiced especially in Mozambique**

The participants indicated that the practice had ceased in Chimanimani but it lives on in Mozambique.

**Simba** acknowledged that it was an acceptable Ndaou custom: *"Before we get that far, I think that in our Ndaou tradition, the first thing was kuriga mutanda."*

**Eric** concurred and stated that: *"That's the tradition and they respected it."*

**Eric** added that: *"This was another way of Ndaou marriage."*

**John** indicated: *"Kuriga mutanda was common among elderly people way back."*

**Godfrey** mentioned that the practice has not completely died out: *"Then the other way that was used was kuriga mutanda. This one is still used in places like Mutsvangwa [into Mozambique]."*

In many cases, the girls who had claim symbols deposited for them at birth or after birth would be married by or to old men who already had several other wives. This is because polygyny was very acceptable among the Ndaou. Ngundu (2010: 30) defines

polygamy as a marriage where there are more than two partners, with polygyny being a marriage where a man marries more than one wife, and polyandry being a marriage where several men are married to one woman ...”. Polyandry was never tolerated among the Ndaus. In a postcolonial hybrid context, the number of polygynous marriages have been significantly reduced. As noted, missionary-founded churches are particularly antagonistic against them although it is widely known that AICs embrace such marriages.

#### **1.1.11 *Kutema ugariri***

In the light of the fact that everyone among the Ndaus was expected to marry (as was stated in Chapter 3), there were numerous provisions in the Ndaus customs to make sure that no one was left out. Men who did not have money could work for their wives.

A man who could not pay *roora* was allowed to marry provided he would offer his service to the wife’s father where he was also to reside. When he had fulfilled what was expected of him he could settle elsewhere with his family. This provision enabled a poor man to obtain a wife under the *kugarira* system. It could be termed an adoption service or service marriage (Ngundu, 2010: 29; Vijfhuizen, 2002: 22; Mair, 1969: 7; Zvobgo, 1996: 109). According to Ngundu (2010: 29), “The basic feature of this irregular approach to marriage was that a poor man, instead of providing the customary *lobolo* [sic!] transactions, would obtain his wife against a long-term service agreement in the employment of his father-in-law. (In the Bible, Jacob worked for a total of fourteen years for his two wives (Genesis 29: 1-30)).”

##### **1.1.11.1 Synonyms and meaning of *Kutema ugariri***

*Kutema ugariri* was referred to by different terms.

**Samuel** listed three different names: “*But ugariri, mugariri, tsengeramutombo ...*”

**Simba** recounted that in: *“The ugariri way. A man would go work for a family, especially in order to marry chiefs’ daughters.”*

**Tonderai** mentioned that the first child that was born in a service marriage would be given to the wife’s parents, responding: *“Yes [when a child is given to the chief], that was called tsengeramutombo.”*

**Tonderai** explained that: *“Tsengeramutombo was because the man did not have money for roora. So they will say you are like a ‘he-goat’. You would give some children to your wife’s father and the other children would be yours.”*

This practice also was described only by the older participants. The younger ones would not have experienced or witnessed this form of Ndaui marriage.

#### **1.1.11.2 How Kutema ugariri was done**

**Simba** recounted how the practice was carried out: *“A man would go work for a family especially in order to marry chiefs’ daughters. Men would go to the chiefs and the chiefs would give their daughters in marriage to these men but the men would have to stay there with the chief and his daughter. All he had to do was bear children with the chief’s daughter. He would stay there with the wife’s family. When he got children, he would give the chief one child to say this is my payment for giving me a wife and the rest would be his children... So this tsengeramutombo would be left with your wife’s family and then you were free to go with the rest of your children together with your wife... those children that were given to the wife’s father would use the grandfather’s name and those that would remain yours would use your name.”*

Ngundu (2010: 29) writes that the adoption service was an irregular approach to marriage in African (Shona) society. This irregular approach, however, catered for the less privileged men among the Ndaui. Although **Simba** (above) concentrated on marrying chiefs’ daughters, less privileged men could render their services to any fathers who had daughters, with the result that they would obtain those daughters for wives. This therefore represented another method of solving a social crisis.



### 1.1.11.3 *Kutema ugariri* is no longer practiced

This practice has also died out.

**Simba** talked about it in the past tense when he said: *“Our elderly people had something called mugariri.”*

**Dakarai** mentioned that: *“... where one can work for a wife but this one is no longer used, it died a long time ago.”*

**Farai** also stated that the practice had ceased: *“There is kutema ugariri, then there is kuzvarira, musengabere (both laugh). We do not hear a lot about these but we hear they were used back then. Yes. [They seem to be dead now].”*

Ngundu (2010: 29) suggests that adoptive service marriages could have died away with the introduction of a cash-economy and also indicates that it (the service marriage) was a common practice among the ancient Jews. More reasons for certain of the practices dying out will be given later in this chapter.

### 1.1.12 *Chinebvudzi*: girl given as compensation for an offence

This was also mentioned as a form of Ndaou marriage customs.

**John** recounted that: *“The other one would happen when a father who had a daughter got involved in a crime or an offence. Having this dispute with another man, the case would be presided over by the chief and this man would be asked to pay (kuripa). Because he would not be having anything to pay with he would go about looking or asking around. If he heard that a certain family had what was called pondo (gold money) back then he would go to borrow. Pondo was gold money that was used back then among the Ndaou people. During the borrowing process he would explain that he had committed an offence but he didn’t have any money to pay back but he will be able to pay back with chinebvudzi (something with hair) referring to his daughter.”*

**John** added that: *“Yes [Chinebvudzi meant his girl child], that was with reference to his girl child (daughter). They would agree and the money will be lent to him. The lender will then be waiting for the growing up of chinebvudzi which, as established, is the borrower’s daughter. The daughter could be still young or could have grown up already. That was the other way of getting married. The way this one would get married, just as in kuriga mutanda, it could be any man in the family that had deposited or had lent the money that would marry. It did not matter who would marry the girl or the woman. Sometimes the father would specify who was going to marry the girl so that everyone would know. In some cases he would want the girl for himself when her time to be married would come.”*

**John** also reported that: *“Yes, even though the girl would still be young. He would want everyone to know that it was him, though already old, who would want to marry the girl so that there won’t be any quarrelling later. If this wasn’t specified in the first place sometimes the girl, when the time would have come to get married, she would refuse to get married to an old man.”*

**John** added: *“Yes, she was supposed to know even as she was growing up that she would be married by an old man. But normally it was young men that would marry girls given to their families in the above mentioned ways.”*

The giving of girl children to compensate for borrowed money or to appease the avenging spirits was very common practice among the Ndau. Bhebe (1995: 57) mentions that there were marriages that were arranged, necessitated by a *ngozi* (avenging) spirit. Vijfhuizen (2002: 22) calls this ‘*ngozi* marriage’. According to Daneel (1971: 137), “The *ngozi* has a right to receive full compensation for the wrongful act which it seeks to avenge. *Mutumbu* must be paid to replace the complete physical stature of the deceased ... the *mutumbu* usually consisted of a young girl and some cattle, sent to the *ngozi*’s ...”. Zvobgo (1991: 11) also mentions *ngozi* as an aggrieved spirit of a dead person which is unforgiving until the matter has been righted. Normally, the matter would be solved after a girl had been given as compensation or after payment was made in the form of cattle or any other agreed forms of payment. This type of marriage can too be said to have infringed on the rights of the girl and so it had to be done away with, although it may still be existing in subtle forms among the Ndau.

'Subtle forms' in this study refers to continual existence under less noticeable forms. In other words, the practice may still exist to a minimal extent in less publicised ways and away from public scrutiny.

### **1.1.13 Kuputswa**

This Nda practice literally means 'to be broken'. As Vijfhuizen (2002: 22) has it, *kuputswa* denotes being broken, probably referring to the heart of the girl that was broken because she was given away.

#### **1.1.13.1 There are two versions of *kuputswa***

- **In a famine a girl is given in marriage in exchange for food**

**Pretty** explained: *"Kuputswa say there is a famine. Then a family has a daughter and then you know a family that has food reserves. You take your daughter and give her over to that family in exchange for food."*

**Prisca** added that: *"parents are suffering from lack of food they look for someone to who they can give their daughter in exchange for food."*

**Simba** concurred with **Pretty** and **Prisca**: *"there is a famine and someone in the community has food and the other family has a daughter or daughters but no food. Due to famine or poverty or ngozi (avenging spirit), the elderly would give their daughter (kuputsa or kuputswa). They would ask for pfuma (wealth) and give the daughter in return."*

Only older participants, those 50 years and above, showed any knowledge about this Nda marriage form.

Ngundu (2010: 28) refers to this practice of child betrothal or credit marriage as another irregular approach to marriage and concedes that, out of the many reasons for marriages to obtain credit as regards a girl, a man would marry off his daughters,

especially during drought years, in order to sustain his family. He could also marry his daughter(s) off to procure cattle with which to provide wives for his sons.

In this respect Mair (1969: 5) asserts that "... in certain circumstances a man may discharge a debt by giving a daughter in marriage without payment ...".

Holleman (1952: 115-116) makes note of *kuzvarira* (to bear a wife for someone) and *kuputsira mwana* (lit., to break or throw away a child). These forms of marriage usually had to do with marrying off very young, sometimes growing-up, and, in exceptional cases, yet unborn girls without their knowledge and/or approval. Holleman (1952: 115-116) adds that "The first term is based on the – now extremely rare – circumstances that one family, for some reason or other, such as debt or close friendship, undertakes to 'bear' a daughter who, when grown-up, will become the wife of a member of the other family. The second term grimly refers to the fate of some young girls who are married off to elderly husbands." This form of marriage too could not continue to thrive in a postcolonial hybrid context. Issues of legislation and others mitigated against such a marriage form.

- **A girl is given in marriage in exchange for money to pay his son's roora**

**Fungai** recounted that: *"Kuputswa was a Ndau way of marrying. If I had boy children and then one of them impregnated another person's daughter (dorwa), and yet we did not have pfuma (money to pay roora), the boy's father would ask a daughter of his who had a boyfriend to go ask the boyfriend to come pay roora. This was so that the roora money would be used to pay roora on behalf of the son who had impregnated another person's daughter. The daughter would go tell her boyfriend and if the boyfriend had pfuma he would come to pay. If he did not have the father would look for a man who could pay roora for his daughter. The father would find someone who had pfuma and give his daughter to him in exchange for money that he will use to pay roora for his son. That man would pay the money and that was kuputswa."*

Ngundu (2010: 28), as noted above, records that a father could marry his daughter(s) off to procure cattle with which to provide wives for his sons. This marriage form too, although it helped solve a social crisis, would not fit well in a postcolonial hybrid

context. One gains the impression that the father treated his daughters as possessions that he could dispense with as and when it pleases him. Such a perception would very much infringe on the rights of the daughters.

#### **1.1.13.2 *Kuputswa* is still practiced among the Ndaou people of Chipinge**

The practice has not completely ceased although it is no longer prevalent among the Ndaou in Chimanimani.

**Fungai** acknowledged it was a Ndaou form of marriage in responding: *“Kuputswa was a Ndaou way of marrying.”*

**Prisca** indicated that: *“there is another one that is still practised by the Ndaou especially part of Chipinge whereby when parents are suffering from lack of food they look for someone to who they can give their daughter in exchange for food.”*

Just like the other Ndaou practices mentioned earlier, this marriage form has failed to survive the postcolonial hybrid context in Chimanimani. It, just as with the rest of the Ndaou marriage forms that have died out, did not respect the opinions of the women involved. They were not given any room to speak and even if they were to speak they would not be heard.

#### **1.1.14 *Roora* with church wedding is widely practiced**

In a postcolonial Ndaou context in Chimanimani, the church wedding has become very popular. ‘Postcolonial’ here, as was mentioned in chapter 1, refers to the period after colonialism started and not to after colonialism ended. In other words, with the coming of colonialism and Westernisation, the Ndaou Christians in Chimanimani adopted the church wedding and it has grown to become a common practice among the Ndaou.

**Anesu** averred that: *“I may call it a Christian marriage whereby one finds a partner and engages. There might be an engagement or no engagement and they also visit*

*the in-laws to be, through a friend or an aunt or someone else. After visiting they are familiar with each other and then they ask for further steps like lobola, they are given a date. They visit the in-laws through someone they call munyai and then they pay lobola as per requirements according to the family. Like in Ndau, actually, it is mostly money. And then after paying because they do it in a Christian way they leave the bride to be there at home. They actually request for a date and they are given a date and they will ask for a wedding and after that they will prepare for the wedding. Through the wedding then they take the bride home.”*

**Kumbirai** observed that: *“Right, [the one where roora would be paid first (koobvunzira)] normally that one is connected to the church wedding.”*

#### **1.1.15 White Christian church wedding**

While the preceding point was linked to *roora*, the white Christian church wedding has become an important integral step in the marriage practices of the Ndau Christians in Chimanimani.

**Vimbai** alluded to the fact that the church wedding is a separate, central element of Ndau Christian marriages: *“Then there is finally the white wedding.”*

#### **1.1.16 Civil marriage: before a district officer**

With the coming of Westernisation, civil marriages before a district officer have also become very common among the Ndau in Chimanimani.

**Herbert**, an elderly white missionary, in response to the question that required him to say what forms of Ndau marriages he knew, stated: *“The one I am probably most familiar with is the marriage before a District Officer that a lot of people had without coming to church marriage I think that’s my understanding of the marriage outside of the church.”*

Mair (1969: 39) notes that “there are three ways of contracting a marriage which will be regarded as valid in law – by native custom, by civil rites, or by Christian ceremony.” *Roora* is the essential legalising characteristic of a marriage by traditional custom. The traditional marriage is often accompanied by a marriage in church, and less often a civil marriage before a district officer. Mair adds that “a growing body of African opinion

regards this (traditional marriage), however, as insufficient to make a marriage valid without a religious or civil ceremony.” She asserts that the civil ceremony and or the religious ceremony secure a woman’s position as the only wife and enable them to sue for maintenance should the husbands desert them.

A civil marriage is in some cases followed by a church ceremony. This is because some churches do not accept a civil marriage as a Christian marriage. According to Mair (1969: 40), “Marriage before the magistrate is becoming increasingly common, but is still not generally regarded as respectable. A civil marriage is sometimes followed by a religious ceremony a few weeks or months later.”

In a postcolonial hybrid context, the Ndau of Chimanimani finds himself or herself sandwiched between different marriage systems: cultural, ecclesiastical and civil. What complicates the issue further is the fact that he or she cannot, according to church regulations, choose just one. Customary marriage is said to be not enough on its own from a Christian perspective and so is civil marriage. On the other hand, he or she cannot choose to merely hold the church wedding alone without also having the customary marriage. This is the dilemma that the current thesis sets out to address.

## **Sub-theme 1.2 Present state of different ways of marrying among the Ndau**

While some of the Ndau marriage forms have died out others continue to live on.

### **1.2.1. Some have died out**

**John**, with reference to *kuputswa*, considered that: “*It is not practised as much as it used to.*”

**Godfrey** also stated that: “*Those ones [like chitsaramvi, chimutsamapfiwa] are not normally used.*”

Apart from the ones indicated as having died out above, there are several others that are no longer used among the Ndau in Chimanimani. Some have already been noted as having ceased in preceding sections in this Chapter. Ngundu (2010: 29) points out

that adoptive service marriage seems to have disappeared with the introduction of a cash-economy. Many Ndaou marriage forms that promoted polygyny also died out. According to Ngundu (2010: 33), “During the colonial and missionary era in sub-Saharan Africa, Europeans, in particular missionaries, strongly condemned polygamy under the pretext of Christianity while avoiding addressing its practice by some godly Old Testament patriarchs (Abraham, Jacob), kings (David, Solomon) and judges (Gideon).” Probably as a consequence of this, such polygynous marriage forms among the Ndaou have faded away. The effect of the European cultural impact on colonised societies should never be undermined. As has been mentioned earlier, however, the Ndaou continued to reinterpret and redefine their marriage practices in the light of the new Western systems that colonialism and missionaries brought.

Vijfhuizen (2002: 23) writes that *kutemaugariri* and *musengabere* are some of the Ndaou marriage forms that have died out.

### **1.2.2 Some are still practiced**

**John** hints that, among the Ndaou marriage forms that are said to have died away, some are still practised in subtle forms: “*Although among the Ndaou some still practise it {kuriga mutanda} in subtle ways without much publicity. This is practised by some few Ndaou people quietly.*”

For Vijfhuizen (2002: 23) the *kutizira*, *matorwa*, *kuputswa*, *chigara mapfiwa*, *kugarwa nkaka* and *ngozi* forms of marriage still exist. It is irrefutable that some of these may still exist among the Ndaou of Chimanimani but if they do it is in very elusive forms.

In a way, the Ndaou did not completely kill off their own cultural marriage practices in a bid to mimic the Westerners. In line with postcolonial theory, they have persistently sought to respond to the European cultural conquest in a way that further defines who they are as Ndaou people and what marriage practices they conform to. Cultural struggles (European and African) continue into the present (Ashcroft & Ahluwalia, 2001: 15; Kennedy, 2000: 112), which is why there is the necessity to explore the duplication of marriages in today’s postcolonial context.



### **Sub-theme 1.3 Reasons for customs (ways of getting married) having died out**

Vijfhuizen (2002: 23) points to the facts that now young people live away from home and earn their own salaries, to government interference and HIV/Aids as some of the reasons for the dying out of some Ndaou traditional marriage forms. The participants in my research gave the following reasons:

#### **1.3.1 Western influence**

**John** considered that: *“They [the other ways, what could have caused their lack in prevalence] died because of the coming of the Western lifestyle.”*

**Tonderai** also stated that: *“It’s Westernisation. [That is the cause that some of these Ndaou ways seem to be dying away, like kuputswa, kuriga mutanda and others].”*

In line with the reason given here, Mair (1969: vii) remarks that “Since the close of the first world war there has been a great intensification of modern influences among African peoples. They have experienced the impact of alien political, religious and economic organizations and of various other factors which have shaken the foundations of community life”. She asserts that the family is the most significant feature of African society and that the process of disintegration of African ways of life is more apparent in this central institution. Ngundu (2010: 33) similarly mentions the disintegrating influence of Westernisation on African customs.

#### **1.3.2 Christianity**

**John** also attributed the dying out of some Ndaou forms of marriages to Christianity, commenting: *“Because when the Western lifestyle came together with Christianity emphasis in gospel messages was that two people should fall in love on their own. A boy and a girl should be allowed to choose their own partners not to be given to arranged marriages.”*

Christianity and Westernisation are intrinsically interconnected in African settings. Ngundu (2010: 2) admits that the European cultural invasion in colonial Africa has left Africans, especially Christians, with legal, social and moral difficulties.

As has been discussed, for Ngundu (2010: 6) the missionaries were strongly opposed to polygamy and *roora*, so much so that they attempted to destroy African marriage customs. When they failed in their attempts, mission churches drafted rules that were meant to do so. The missionaries' dislike of traditional marriage practices was translated into church policy in African societies. Chapter 4 provided some historical background to this, with its use of primary sources. This has contributed immensely to the disintegration and dying out of several African and/or Ndaue marriage forms.

### 1.3.3. Zimbabwean Constitution and laws

**Evans** put the blame on Zimbabwean laws when he declared: *"It is the law. It's the constitution of Zimbabwe. It affected those practices, because some of these ways were forceful. The daughters did not have any choice nor any say. [The law says you cannot force someone into marriage, she should decide on her own]."*

**John** concurred with Evans: *"And laws also intervene to say you should not force someone to do what he or she does not want."*

According to Phillip and Morris (1971: 97), "... in Southern Rhodesia [now Zimbabwe] section 12 of the Native Marriages Act, 1950, provides that 'any agreement whereby a native girl under the age of 12 years is, whether for any consideration or not, promised in marriage to any man shall be of no force or effect, and it is made a punishable offence to enter into such an agreement.'" Ncube (1989: 149-150) likewise mentions that marriage of minors is not permissible under Zimbabwean laws.

*Myzimbabwe News* (2017) reports that "a man who allegedly lured a 13-year old to his home and turned her into his wife using the traditional means known as '*musengabere*' (an old traditional practice where a man would grab a girl and take her to his place of dwelling, and make her his wife by force) has earned himself a two-year jail term ...".

This news item buttresses the impact of the laws on traditional or customary practices in Zimbabwe.

#### **1.3.4 Education**

**John** cited education as another reason: *“Because of schooling as well, even those kids when they talk about their arranged marriages at school they would be laughed at. That is how it died bit by bit, gradually.”*

**Simba** added: *“... and education as well. Education has caused all those things to die away because today now people want to learn.”*

**Farai** also mentioned that: *“I think it [the cause for the extinction] is because people are now educated. Education is killing or routing out some things.”*

It is not completely possible to treat education as completely divorced from Westernisation. The education that the Ndaou children receive in schools is Westernised, so much so that they begin appreciating other aspects outside of their own Ndaou cultural practices – issues that they most likely would not have been exposed to were it not for schooling and/or education.

#### **1.3.5 Livelihood changes: Employment and available currency**

**Evans** adduced livelihood changes as another reason, in responding that: *“Another reason would be because people are now working and earning money. The log can no longer be used because people now know how to use money. Those ways were useful when people lacked money. Now money is charged and it is now money that is used to pay roora.”*

According to Mair (1969: xii), “Emphasis is shifting to the individual aspect of marriage ... it very often happens nowadays that a young man is an entirely free agent. His ability to provide the necessary bride-price out of his own earnings may make him, in practice, fully independent of his own kinsfolk ...”. The parents and/or relatives cannot,

in this context, then decide on behalf of the young man as to who he is supposed to marry or not to marry.

Citing the changes in livelihood, Mair (1969: xiii) notes that “polygamy is usually found to be incompatible with modern urban life ...”.

Among other factors, the introduction of money, modern systems of transport and communications, and the opportunity of employment have brought about significant changes. It is not difficult to trace the connexion between economic developments such as these and the concurrent changes in marriage custom and family life (Ngundu, 2010: 29; Mair, 1969: xiii).

### **1.3.6 Women’s rights**

**John** alluded women’s rights as another reason when he stated that: *“And today it is even worse with strict rights given to women; they now have power to take whoever tries to force them to court. So, the fathers can no longer give their daughters in marriage because this will land them in deep trouble.”*

It should be noted that some of the African (Ndau) marriage customs resulted in the curtailment of the woman’s freedom of choice (Mair, 1969: xi). Women’s rights advocate against such.

Mugambi (2004: 240) also notes that “One of the reasons for refusal by widows to be inherited is the risk of becoming infected with HIV/AIDS.” With the rights that women enjoy under Zimbabwean laws, no one can force them into being inherited or into other forceful forms of Ndau marriages.

### **1.3.7 Globalisation**

**Farai** pointed out that: *“Then there is globalisation. People move from one place to another and then when they compare their cultural practices to other people’s practices they see what may not be proper.”*

**Simba** concurred, responding: *“Yes. [Another reason would be because people no longer stay in their villages of origin forever. They are now very mobile].”*

In essence, therefore, globalisation has helped open cultures up to the rest of the world. In interacting with people from other parts of the world the Ndaui get to know how other people conduct their lives elsewhere. This calls for a questioning and reinterpreting of their own cultural practices. In the process they revitalise certain practices and shed others as they see fit.

### **1.3.8 People themselves have changed**

**John** stated that the Ndaui people themselves have changed: *“But it started being resisted bit by bit with opposition from other people in the communities with others despising the practice.”*

**Farai** added that: *“The other one was a bit embarrassing and nowadays people do not want that embarrassment that comes with kutema ugariri. To go work for the in-laws in order to get a wife does not augur well with many people today. It seems one will have shown himself to be of a very low class. So people shun it.”*

It naturally follows that a people that has been exposed to foreign elements cannot remain as it was, unscathed by the prevailing interactions. The Ndaui are not an exception. They have significantly changed in the light of their changing environment. This is why this thesis does not aim for indigeneity but for hybridity, to such an extent that everything is put together in a bid to come up with solutions. The crux of the matter is not to reconstruct the former Ndaui marriage practices before missionaries, Westernisation, and Christianity crept in but to reconcile them with the Western-Christian elements from a postcolonial hybrid perspective.

## **5.5 CONCLUSION OF THE CHAPTER**

Following the phenomenological approach and postcolonialism as the paradigm that underpins this study, this chapter gave the first part of my research findings and literature control. It furnished biographic profiles of the 20 individual participants and

those of the participants in the 5 focus groups. The 7 themes emerging from the data were introduced together with their sub-themes, categories and sub-categories. Theme 1: Marriage practices amongst the Ndau, was discussed in detail in this chapter. The following sub-themes were likewise presented:

- Sub-theme 1.1: Known marriage practices of the Ndau people
- Sub-theme 1.2: Present state of different ways of marrying among the Ndau
- Sub-theme 1.3: Reasons for customs (ways of getting married) having died out

Under sub-theme 1.1 *roora* was presented as the most common and known marriage practice amongst the Ndau people.

The second sub-theme focused on the present state of different ways of marrying among the Ndau of Chimanimani. It was established that some such practices had died out while others are still practiced.

The third and final sub-theme in this chapter concerned the reasons for customs (ways of getting married) having died out among the Ndau of Chimanimani, Zimbabwe. Eight such reasons were presented:

- Western influence
- Christianity
- Zimbabwean Constitution and laws
- Education
- Livelihood changes: Employment and available currency
- Women's rights
- Globalisation and
- People themselves having changed.

The following two chapters will focus on the remaining themes, sub-themes, categories and sub-categories.

## **CHAPTER 6**

### **RESEARCH FINDINGS AND LITERATURE CONTROL – PART 2**

#### **6.1 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter continues with the presentation of the research findings and literature control. Chapter 5 dealt with one theme and its sub-themes, categories and sub-categories. This chapter deals with four themes together with their sub-themes, categories and sub-categories. The current chapter will, like the preceding one, present the research findings using the phenomenological approach and postcolonialism as the paradigm that underpins the study. In other words, postcolonialism informs the way the findings will be presented.

The preceding chapter dealt with the following theme:

- Theme 1: Marriage practices amongst the Ndau people

The following four themes will be discussed in this chapter:

- Theme 2: Most preferred way of marriage amongst the Ndau people
- Theme 3: Various reasons for having a 'white'/church wedding after traditional marriage
- Theme 4: Perceived relationship between traditional marriage rites and Christian marriage
- Theme 5: Different views on the sufficiency of traditional marriages.

It ought to be mentioned at the outset that, like the previous chapter, this chapter will use literature control for data verification. Each theme, sub-theme, category and sub-category will be supported by storylines and quotes from scholars where it is possible to do so. Storylines and scholars' quotes may be repeated in support of different points if they are deemed relevant for those different points.

## 6.2 THEME 2: MOST PREFERRED WAY OF MARRIAGE AMONGST THE NDAU PEOPLE

### Sub theme 2.1 Paying *roora* and *mutimba* were referred to as the preferred way of marriage amongst the Ndau

As has already been reiterated in this study, the Ndau people have continued to value and practice *roora* in a postcolonial context. This was mentioned by the participants as the most preferred way of marriage among the Ndau of Chimanimani. According to Ngundu (2010: 26) “Normally, the form or method of marrying which was most acceptable in African (Shona) traditional society was the one ... of requesting a wife or contracting marriage. It was by no means the only form of marriage although it was the ideal method.” As such, it can be emphasised that Western marriage systems did not completely take over from the Ndau marriage practices in Chimanimani, Zimbabwe.

#### 2.1.1 The paying of the *roora* is referred to as the most preferred traditional way of marriage

**Edwin** responded: “Yes, there were different ways. *Mutimba* was the most preferred way just like we do today in Christianity with the church wedding.”

**Anesu’s** sentiments about paying *roora* concurred with **Edwin’s** above when she said: “Yes, the two families together. That is the most preferred way.”

**Patrick** also stated that *kubvunzira* which ended with *mutimba* was the most acceptable when he stated that: “*Mutimba*, where the girl would be accompanied to her husband’s home.”

**Aurthur** concurred with the above sentiments: “The one I described first earlier on where proper channels are followed until the girl is taken to her husband’s family by her relatives.”



**Prisca** explained: *“The most preferred is where a boy proposes love to a girl and then he sends a negotiator (munyai) to pay roora and then the wife comes to his home in a proper way. Yes, through mutimba.”*

Daneel (1971: 248) asserts that, “The custom of contracting a marriage by paying bride wealth has proved to be one of the most tenacious and deeply rooted of all customs in ... African society.” He (1971: 252) also mentions that *kumema* (to call) or *kukumbira* (to ask) is the one traditionally recognised marriage procedure that is acceptable to churches. ‘Acceptable’ here does not mean that churches would not expect a church wedding to ensue, but that it was acknowledged as an acceptable cultural practice. Ngundu (2010: 26) concurs and declares that “Normally, the form or method of marrying which was most acceptable in African (Shona) traditional society was the one ... of requesting a wife or contracting marriage.”

Vijfhuizen (2002: 22) also considers that *matorwa* or *mabvunziro*, where the girl would be taken to her man’s home after the first payment (*mabvunziro*) or *roora* had been made, was the most recommended marriage in the past.

### **2.1.2 The *mutimba* is referred to as the preferred traditional way of marriage which includes the paying of the *roora* and the wife being accompanied to the husband’s home**

**Edwin** mentioned: *“Yes, there were different ways. Mutimba was the most preferred way just like we do today in Christianity with the church wedding.”*

**Anesu**, on the issue of *kubvunzira* and *mutimba*, asserted: *“Yes, the two families together. That is the most preferred way.”*

**Patrick** concurred with **Edwin** and **Anesu**: *“Mutimba, where the girl would be accompanied to her husband’s home.”*

**Aurthur** also regarded *mutimba* as the most preferred. He said: *“The one I described first earlier on where proper channels are followed until the girl is taken to her husband’s family by her relatives.”*

**Prisca** concurred with all the others above when she stated that: *“The most preferred is where a boy proposes love to a girl and then he sends a negotiator (munyai) to pay roora and then the wife comes to his home in a proper way. Yes, through mutimba.”*

As established above, Ngundu (2010: 26) and Daneel (1971: 252) agree with what the participants had to say. It is important to note that, in a postcolonial hybrid context, the Ndaу people still cherish and value their marriage practices. They have, of course, weeded out much that does not conform to the postcolonial hybrid context.

**Sub-theme 2.2 Other than being the preferred way(s), roora and mutimba are referred to as most acceptable, expected, well prepared and right (proper) way**

**Godfrey** responded: *“The mutimba way. [It is the most acceptable].”*

**Godfrey** added: *“Yes, it is the most acceptable.”*

**Kumbirai** said the same: *“It is the most acceptable.”*

**Edwin** concurred: *“Yes, it was the expected way. Meaning it was a boy and girl who was expected to follow this mutimba way.”*

**Patrick** also stated: *“Mutimba was the right way of marrying.”*

**Prisca**, with respect to *mutimba*, clarified: *“And this was the proper marriage in the Ndaу settings. It was an organised marriage, if it were in Christianity it would be called the wedding day.”*

**Patrick** recounted: *“Everything was prepared well.”*

As established above, participants were unanimous in asserting that *roora* and *mutimba* were the most acceptable, expected, well prepared and right (proper) way. The past tense ‘were’ has been used here because *mutimba* has significantly declined due to ‘missionary-Christianity’ influence. It has to a very great extent been replaced by the church wedding that now follows *roora* among Ndaу Christians in missionary founded churches in Chimanimani. This is the reason why this study attempted to determine the relationship between the traditional marriage practices and Christian

marriage practices among the Ndau in Chimanimani. In a postcolonial hybrid context, it is very critical to find a way in which the traditional and Christian marriage practices can co-exist without any supposed hierarchy of importance between them.

### **Sub-theme 2.3 *Mutimba* is the celebration**

The following is what the participants had to say about *mutimba* as a Ndau celebration of marriage:

**Ronald** commented: *“Mutimba is a method of celebrating what will already have happened. The girl will then be accompanied to the man’s home [at a later date] .... that is when the celebration called mutimba will be done. That is when the festivities will be. Relatives gather and the rituals are performed.”*

**Edwin** added: *“... back then, what is called michato (weddings) nowadays that we do in churches was called mutimba.”*

**Prisca** concurred with the above: *“And this was the proper marriage in the Ndau settings. It was an organised marriage, if it were in Christianity it would be called the wedding day.”*

The participants mentioned that *mutimba* was a celebration of a marriage that had already been constituted through marriage negotiations and *roora*. They equated *mutimba* to church wedding ceremonies. It is important to reiterate the fact that *mutimba* has died down among Ndau Christians in missionary-founded churches but that it lives on among the Ndau people in African Initiated Churches and among those not affiliated to any Christian churches. On the whole, it remains a very valued custom among the Ndau in today’s postcolonial context. There may actually be prospects of revitalising it among the Ndau if UBC and other missionary-founded churches rethink their theology on marriage practices.

### **Sub-theme 2.4 Elements and sequence of *mutimba***

The participants recounted how the events would be acted out in *mutimba*.

#### **2.4.1 Man and young woman fall in love and agree to get married**

**Batsirai** said: *“They fall in love and agree to get married.”*

**Yeukai** added: *“People marry after the man proposes love to a girl.”*

**Aurthur** also stated: *“The Ndaus ways of getting married that I know are that a boy and a girl find each other by themselves.”*

From the above, it can be deduced that it is important for the man and the young woman to fall in love first and between themselves agree to get married. This might be because of the influence of Christianity and Westernisation. In earlier times, the marriages could be arranged by uncles and aunts on the paternal side on both sides. In a postcolonial hybrid context, it has become more appropriate and more acceptable for the two (man and young woman) to make their own choices. The aforementioned is in accord with Goldin and Gelfand’s (1975: 161) assertion that, “A man and woman meet, see each other frequently and fall in love.”

#### **2.4.2 Parents are informed**

After the two fall in love and agree to marry each other they will then have to inform their parents and some relatives. In actual fact, the two could not approach their parents by themselves to break the news. Paternal aunts and uncles were used for this purpose, thereby underlining the importance of kinship ties among the Ndaus of Chimanimani, Zimbabwe.

##### **2.4.2.1 Ways of informing the parents on the girl’s side**

- **Girl tells aunt**

**Yeukai** reported: *“Girl tells her family through aunt.”*

**Aurthur** concurred with **Yeukai** and stated: *“The girl’s aunt will also play some intermediating role. She is the one who conveys messages.”*

**Batsirai** also said: *“In the girl’s family, normally the aunts are the first ones to be informed by the girl.”*

**Prisca** agreed with all the above, saying: *“... a girl goes to inform her aunts once she has a boyfriend.”*

As already stated above, the participants emphasised that it was the paternal aunts (or uncles) who would be informed first by the girl.

- **Aunt mediates**

**Batsirai** explained: *“The aunts will then inform the girl’s parents.”*

**Yeukai** also said: *“Aunt tells girl’s father.”*

**Prisca** stated: *“Then, the aunts take the message further to the parents. [Or] They can start with a brother to tell him that the girl is now in a relationship ...”*

**Prisca** added: *“‘Brother’ as in the girl’s brother. They mention that the girl now has a partner.”*

**Prisca** also mentioned: *“The parents or the brother can then ask to see the partner, depending on how they receive the news. Then from there they wait to hear the arrangements of when the man would want to come pay roora.”*

**Aurthur** stated: *“The girl’s family would also want to examine the boy or young man and establish if he will make a good son-in-law and husband to their daughter or not.”*

**Yeukai** recounted: *“Girl’s father informs his relatives. They decide on the date the son-in-law can come ...”*

**Prisca**, regarding *roora*, observed: *“The girl’s family will organise as a family and make the man know what their requirements are like.”*

**Yeukai** stated: *“The aunt tells the girl of agreed date.”*

**Yeukai** added: *“[The] girl tells boyfriend or the aunts will inform the girl’s partner of the requirements. Just like that.”*

**Prisca** also mentioned: *“The girl’s family will also arrange among themselves as to who should be there on the day roora is paid.”*

**Yeukai** added: *“Food is prepared by the girl’s family.”*

**Dakarai** also mentioned that: *“They brew beer (doro) or mahewu [a non-intoxicating African brewed drink].”*

After the aunts have been informed they will then play intermediary roles from this stage on and throughout the marriage process. They would inform the girl’s brothers, parents and any other relatives about the girl’s relationship and intention to marry. Together then, the kinsmen and women will make arrangements for the future. As some of the participants said above, the girl’s parents and relatives would want to know more about the girl’s partner before the actual marriage itself. A date will then be set for the prospective son-in-law and his kinsmen to come and pay *roora*. Before this, however, the prospective son-in-law would have to visit some of the girl’s relatives and her parents for introductions. This is one way in which the girl’s relatives would get to know him better. They would also establish in these visits whether the man did not belong to the same clan or totem as the girl’s since it was a taboo for people sharing a totem to marry each other.

#### **2.4.2.2 Ways of informing the parents on the man’s side**

In very much the same manner, the man also had to inform his parents. This is what participants had to say about it:

**Aurthur** explained: *“the young man can then go to his aunt to tell her that he has found a girl. The aunt will then take this message to the boy’s parents. The boy can also take his girlfriend to his parents to show them that this is the girl that I have fallen in love with.”*

**Batsirai** responded: *“The father is also told that the young man now wants to marry. In a lot of cases those who have vanasekuru close by they tell them they now want to get married.”*

**Aurthur** continued: *“The young man’s family would want to know if the girl is a good girl or not.”*

**Batsirai** added: *“They ask the young man if he has the money for roora and where he wants to marry from. Then the young man will give the details of the girl and of the family that she is from and where the family stays. If the father wants to know more about the girl’s family his son will provide the details. The relatives would also want to know if the young man has the money to pay for roora. The young man will say how much he has. In most cases, to those that can, the father will also contribute an amount saying he can’t let his son pay everything on his own.”*

**Batsirai** also commented: *“Trustworthy people are chosen, people that can speak without difficulty, to go negotiate with the girl’s family. [When] the two families agree on a date ...”*

**Ronald** contributed, saying, *“...the boy gathers pfuma that he will use to pay to the girl’s parents.”*

**Batsirai** also said: *“Afterwards, all being well, the relatives will be informed about the son wanting to marry.”*

The paternal aunts were equally important on the man’s side as well. They informed the parents and any other relatives about the man’s intentions to marry and they would intermediate throughout the marriage process. The girl would have to be introduced to the man’s parents and to his other relatives too before *roora* negotiations could be

commenced. The men's kinsmen and women would make sure the man was prepared for *roora* payments. In pre-colonial times, the man would get help in raising *roora* money and or goods from his parents and kinsmen but this has changed with the coming of the cash economy where one can get a job and raise his own *roora* money and goods.

#### **2.4.3 The *roora* is paid and further arrangements ensue**

**Yeukai** clarified: *"On the agreed upon date, the young man and friend(s) come. A young man will take his friend, his mukwasha or mukwambo [a son-in-law in the young man's family], and another person to go."*

**Batsirai** also commented: *"...those men that were chosen will then go to pay roora. Normally the young man and the chosen men (vanyai) go together. They will find the in-laws waiting. They will introduce themselves to the in-laws and then the roora process ensues. Young man and friends ask for a plate and place a small amount in it to initiate talks (kukumbira ndiro yemuromo). It may just be \$30 [US dollars or bond notes]. Then they will say why they came."*

**Ronald** said: *"He goes with a munyai and they pay roora. Afterwards the man is asked if he wants to be given his wife. The man responds to say he wants his wife."*

**Dakarai** mentioned : *"... and then pay roora."*

**Edwin** added: *"If the 'in-laws' were satisfied with the roora that was paid then they would arrange to take the bride to her husband's family (kuperekedza). It was also a gathering of some sort ..."*

**Dakarai** concurred with **Edwin's** sentiments above when he said: *"They will then prepare to bring the bride to the bridegroom's place (kuperekedza)."*

**Edwin also** added: *"... it could take say two months after paying roora."*



**Aurthur** also indicated: *“When the time comes for them to get married, a day for mutimba will be arranged.”*

The importance of kinsmen is further emphasised in the responses from participants given above. It was, and it is still impossible, for a man to take his own *roora* on his own and go to pay without the involvement of his kinsmen. After *roora* negotiations, with the man and his people having paid what they had (they did not have to pay all the required money and/or goods on the same day), they would then state whether a *mutimba* should be arranged or a church wedding instead. This dichotomy too is a result of the co-existence of traditional Ndaou customs and Western marriage practices. The Ndaou have had to reinterpret their own Ndaou marriage practices in intersection with Western practices as taught by missionaries who were themselves custodians of the Victorian marriage norms and practices.

#### **2.4.4 Kuperekedza: the girl is accompanied to the man’s home at night**

As was mentioned in Chapter 5, the girl would be accompanied to the man’s home in the evening or at night.

**Godfrey** explained: *“Normally they come at night.”*

**Faith** also stated: *“... the girl is accompanied to the man’s home at night.”*

**Patrick** concurred with the above when he said that: *“The mutimba culture was quite exciting. ...It is not done during the day but in the evening.”*

In line with the above, Ngundu (2010: 180) mentions that “the handing over ceremony normally involves only the paternal aunts and sisters of the bride who would take the bride late in the evening to the groom’s house (her parents would normally be excluded from the rituals) ...”. MacGonagle (2007: 61) reports that although Ndaou marriage ceremonies revolved around the negotiation and payment of *roora*, elders recall ceremonies where the bride was ceremoniously escorted to the groom’s family by a group of girls and women who prepared maize meal and beer to take with them.

It can be argued that there was really nothing explicitly wrong about the *mutimba* ceremony warranting its disapproval by the missionaries. Of course, some aspects of it like beer drinking and ancestor veneration may have been deemed evil from a Christian or missionary perspective, but these could easily have been rooted out while still preserving the custom. Chapter 4 attempted to portray how the missionaries failed to appreciate the cultural practices of the people they had come to evangelise. Participants showed that they appreciated this custom. A postcolonial hybrid revisiting of the custom by the black clergy and theologians may be very helpful with the understanding that mimicking the white missionaries and their practices should be replaced with developing theologies that are relevant for Africans in a Ndaun postcolonial hybrid context in Chimanimani, Zimbabwe.

#### **2.4.4.1 Preparations are done**

Participants informed me that *mutimba* was a very important Ndaun marriage ceremony for which significant preparations had to be done.

**Eunice** contributed: *“In mutimba, those from the bride’s family prepare mealie-meal, chicken, and a mat. The young sister, aunt, and someone who stands for the father go with these items to the groom’s home.”*

**Aurthur** stated: *“They will be carrying maheu and other things to play with or drink when they get there.”*

**Patrick** recounted: *“Everything was prepared well. We liked it because on the day the bride would be coming a lot of maheu [African non-alcoholic brew] would be brewed if they were Christians. If they were not [Christians] they would brew beer and accompany the bride in the evening. It is not done during the day but in the evening.”*

It evidently was a very joyous celebration characterised by many festivities. **Patrick’s** response above shows how the Ndaun constantly reinterpreted their customs in the light of Christianity and Westernisation. Substituting beer with *maheu* was clearly a way of maintaining the custom in a way that would not contradict the missionaries’

teaching on 'beer drinking'. Chapter 4 has already described how SAGM missionaries were opposed to beer drinking by the Ndaou.

#### **2.4.4.2 Aunts of the bride and/or others accompany the bride**

Unlike in *kutizira*, where the bride would in some cases go alone to the man's home, the bride here would, in all cases, be accompanied by others.

**Ronald** clarified: *"The girl will then be accompanied to the man's home."*

**Eunice** mentioned: *"... she will be accompanied to the husband's home by her aunts, friends and relatives."*

**Godfrey** concurred with **Ronald** and **Eunice** when he noted: *"The wife will be brought to her husband's home by her aunts. Normally they come at night."*

**Aurthur** also stated: *"The girl is taken by her aunts to her husband's place."*

**Dakarai** affirmed the aforementioned when he said: *"The bride comes with a lot of people accompanying her. They normally come in the evening."*

**Fungai** implied that *mutimba* had more people accompanying the bride compared to *kutizira* when he responded: *"Those that would marry without doing the above, those that do matorwa, would be accompanied by two people only."*

**Patrick** also stated: *"Mutimba, unlike kutizisa, is well organised. The girl's parents and relatives, including friends, accompany the girl to her man's home. There will be aunts, the fathers and others."*

Ngundu (2010: 180) and MacGonagle (2007: 61) have already been quoted above to support the fact that the bride was accompanied to the man's home by her sisters, paternal aunts, other girls and women. Her parents would normally not be part of the group that went with her to the man's home. The delegation would not be empty handed, as has been mentioned above and shall be seen below.

#### 2.4.4.3 Happenings on the way to and arrival at the groom's home at night

The participants emphasised that the mood would be very jubilant and jovial in *mutimba*.

**Patrick** put it as follows: *"Clay pots with beer will be carried as they would sing along. In mutimba they will be singing while on the way:*

*Chechengure woye touyeyo*

*Ayeee Hiyooooo.*

*Ayyyyyy Hiyoooo touyeyo*

*Chechengure woye, chechengure touyeyo."*

[Most of the contents of this song did not really mean anything, but it was an established *mutimba* song among the Ndau of Chimanimani, Zimbabwe. The part that says '*touyeyo*' meant 'we are coming there' and of course they would be on their way to the groom's home].

**Edwin** stated: *"Yes [in preparation], because some would do it with beer (doro). They would then come with the doro to the groom's homestead."*

**Linda** recounted: *"The bride will be covered with a cloth. The cloth will be removed after greetings but also after some money is paid for it to be removed."*

**Patrick** added: *"When they were close, they normally would have a sort of tin with coins. The bride's father would carry this and sometimes with a whip as well. As they would be arriving he would shout: "Vhuka mukando" [mukando with reference to the throwing of coins that would ensue]. Then he would shake the coins and throw the tin on the ground sending the coins into different directions. People would then rush to pick up the coins but he will also be coming with a whip. This was a way of announcing their arrival. Then all the rituals would then be done."*

**Edwin** narrated: *[In the evening] "When they arrived, they would come in a seemingly violent way (nehasha). They would come with men including the uncles, brothers, and others including their neighbours and friends where they will be coming from. The men*

*in the groom's family will have to flee. They will whip you if they found you in the home upon arrival or anytime that evening. After everything had settled then we could come closer and it was over."*

**Eunice** elucidated: *"When they get there they do not get inside the house before some money is paid. For them to get into the yard they are given money by the groom's family. For them to get into the house they are also given some more money. Once they are inside they will be given some more money for them to sit in a designated place. They will sit on the mat prepared for them and then they will be given some more money to greet them. More money will be given to them to greet the bride in particular."*

**Fungai** added: *"When they got to the groom's home they would sit outside the yard. One boy would come from among them and come drop something just outside your houses. You would pick it and for the people to move from outside the yard into the yard they needed to be given money. They will be given a small amount of money. When they got inside the house a traditional mat will be rolled out for them to sit. They will be given another small amount for them to sit."*

From the above, it can be deduced that a great deal would happen on the way to the groom's home. In addition to the above, MacGonagle (2007: 61) mentions that as they approached the groom's home, they would sing, *"Tauya nayee. Makoti. Tauya nayee"* (we have brought the bride), announcing their arrival with the bride in the process. The song may be different from what the participants in my research told me but the two carry the same meaning and significance.

#### **2.4.4.4 How the night is spent**

**Dakarai** explained : *"... and spend the night singing. The groom's family will also be singing teasing the guests and the bride's people will also be singing teasing the family of the groom. But it will all be in a happy mood."*

**Edwin** added: *"They would come in the evening and sleep."*

There may not have been homogeneity in the occurrences in the many different Ndaus as evidenced from the participants' responses above. What is indisputable, however, is the fact that that first night was eventful. It also does not seem as if the events would go on for the whole night. **Edwin** commented that they would sleep during that first one.

Only older participants and those from African Initiated Churches would have witnessed *mutimba*. The practice has been replaced by the church wedding among Ndaus Christians of missionary-founded churches' background.

#### **2.4.4.5 Slaughtering and eating of chickens and goats and other food rituals**

The proceedings were characterised by feasting and celebrating.

**Edwin** stated: *"Then what needed to be done would be done, with goats and chickens being slaughtered."*

**Fungai** recounted: *"A chicken will be given to them. They will slaughter it themselves and cook it, and then eat it. That would be in the evening. Then a goat will be given over to them and they will slaughter it that same evening. They would cook it again. The groom's family will be given a part called bandauko and another called hloko from the goat. That is what the groom's family will be given. Then they will eat. Someone will have brought a basket (chitundu) full of ufu (mealie meal) from the bride's family. To take it off her head will need money. After a small amount is paid then the basket will be taken off her head. Chigaratsvo and chizva (parts of the goat) will be kept aside. Chipfuba will also be kept aside. They take these to give to the bride's mother and father back at home. The rest of the goat they will eat there. That was Ndaus marriage. This would be called marrying the right way. That was the Ndaus wedding."*

**Eunice** added that: *"When time for food comes they will be given some more money for them to eat (without being given the money they won't eat)."*

This feasting element that characterised *mutimba* has been transferred to the church wedding celebrations. Unfortunately, this has contributed immensely to making church weddings exorbitant and financially out of reach of many Ndaou Christians in Chimanimani, Zimbabwe. The study will revisit this issue later.

#### **2.4.5 The morning rituals of cleaning and *mafuta***

There were rituals the following morning.

**Patrick** explained: *“The following morning they would wake up to sweep the yard gathering some small lumps of litter that would need money for each lump to be cleared off the yard. Bathing water will be boiled and given to people to bath. No one would bath for free, it was all for a fee.”*

**Edwin** also said: *“In the morning, early in the morning the following day they would wake up to clean the yard.”*

**Edwin** added: *“In the morning like now (around 6/ 7 am) the proceedings would be starting with the neighbours arriving and gathering.”*

**Edwin** recounted that: *“The bride would be taken and then an African mat (bonde) would be rolled out where the bride would be made to sit pachiwanzwe (outside the huts). The aunts would be there (the groom’s sisters) and the in-laws and neighbours (vavakidzani) would also be present. In other words, neighbours were also invited to the function. They would gather there because there will be beer and a lot of food.”*

**Edwin** further added: *“Some oil (mafuta) would be smeared on the bride as a sign of satisfaction that the bride had been married a virgin.”*

**Edwin** went on to say: *“The mafuta would be applied to the bride by the aunts (the groom’s sisters) until they were done then the festivities (mabiko) would follow with the eating of the food.”*

MacGonagle (2007: 62) mentions that the women who escorted the bride would perform any chores that needed to be done and leave on the second day. In a sense, the second day was equally as eventful as the first evening or night.

#### **2.4.6 Festivities**

**Ronald** mentioned: *“...that is when the celebration called mutimba will be done. That is when the festivities will be. Relatives gather and the rituals are performed.”*

**Dakarai** added: *“Then in the morning the groom’s family will have prepared food. The guests will be given food; a goat is killed and prepared for them. Normally this is what is done. Chickens will also be slaughtered and served.”*

The issue of sharing food was and continues to be an integral aspect of Ndau gatherings and ceremonies. In fact, there is a Ndau or Shona saying that mentions exactly how important eating together is among the Ndau: *‘ukama igasva hunozadziswa nekudya’* (relationships are empty and can only be made full by eating). As mentioned above, the Ndau have reworked and reinterpreted this importance by transferring it to festivities associated with the church wedding.

#### **2.4.7 The bride goes to the husband’s sleeping room**

The participants mentioned that the bride would sleep in her mother-in-law’s house for a while but she would need to move to the groom’s room at some stage.

**Edwin** explained: *“There was what was called gota/yawe (the man’s sleeping room). The man would be having his sleeping room and he will be staying there. Then when all the other people will have left there would be rituals (zvirango) to allow for the bride to go sleep in the husband’s sleeping room – to now stay with her husband.”*

**Edwin** further noted: *“Yes, there was a specific way of doing it. Women back then would be sort of slippery or elusive (kutiza-tiza). What would happen was that after finishing supper in the evening, the husband’s sisters would lure the bride into the*



*husband's sleeping room under the guise of just going there to pass time. The bride would then be taken there, or the husband's young brothers could also be there. They would go sit and pass time doing zvirahwe in the yawe. The rest will have agreed that they will stay for some time and then go out one by one leaving the bride alone with the groom in the yawe. The bride will then realise that she had been left alone with her husband at which time the husband will lock the door (Both laugh)."*

One of the older participants, **Edwin**, details above how the bride would move from the groom's mother's house to the groom's room. He evidently had witnessed what he narrated; something the younger participants most likely have not had an opportunity to experience.

#### **2.4.8 The bride's family and friends return home but some people remain with the bride for a while**

**Dakarai** stated that: *"The following day in the afternoon the rest will go back leaving the bride with her aunt with the groom's family."*

**Patrick** reported: *"In the end, towards the end of the second day a lot of people would leave for their homes. As they would be leaving they would normally sing this song:*

*Yaya woye tovhaisa*

*Yaya woye taakuenda*

*Yaya woye tovhaisa*

*Yaya woye taakuenda*

*Duri ngeduri tovhaisa yaya woye taakuenda*

*Mutyo ngemutyo tovhaisa yaya woye taakuenda*

*The last part meant you are now going to be working here but now we are leaving. So they will cry together bidding each other farewell. Then they would leave. That was mutimba."*

**Edwin** went on to say: *“Afterwards people would disperse and the newly married woman would remain with her husband’s family. She would remain with two people, her aunt and the bride’s friend. Sometimes they would take a week or more and then leave her as they went back to their homes.”*

One gets a sense that *mutimba* ceremonies were well arranged and well executed. It is fascinating to learn how different people would perform different roles and different people would leave at different times. This further buttresses the assertion that Ndaun traditional marriages were very rich and complex.

#### **2.4.9 The bride’s aunts return home**

**Dakarai** stated: *“After two days the aunt will also leave leaving the bride behind. This is how an Ndaun marriage is conducted.”*

As already established, the bride’s paternal aunt would leave after all the others will have left. This was probably the case because she wanted to make sure the bride had settled well before she left.

#### **2.4.10 Kubikiswa: The bride cooks in her own separate kitchen**

**Aurthur** recounted: *“After this is done, the husband will then be given permission to allow his wife to start cooking in her own kitchen separate from his mother’s kitchen. The wife is guided through this process by her mother-in-law (her husband’s mother). This process where the bride is allowed to start cooking in her own kitchen is called kubikiswa.”*

It would appear, as stated above, that each stage in the *mutimba* process was well orchestrated and well directed. The bride would have to wait for a specific moment where she could move from cooking in the mother-in-law’s kitchen to cooking in her own kitchen. Family and kinship ties are further bolstered here. The new couple in a sense did not marry for their own sake. Everything was with the family and kinsmen and women’s involvement. The individualistic type of marriages can then be argued to

have come about as a result of Western influence. Nowadays, more often than not, the newly weds live on their own from after the church wedding and in the future. There is not as much family involvement as there used to be. All this needs to be reconsidered if it is deemed that kinship ties remain important in a postcolonial hybrid context.

The following section deals with the next theme.

### **6.3 THEME 3: VARIOUS REASONS FOR HAVING A WHITE/ CHURCH WEDDING AFTER TRADITIONAL MARRIAGE**

The participants gave several reasons why some Ndaou people have church weddings after their traditional marriage. This is very critical if the Ndaou people are going to assess the necessity of having to perpetuate the culture of having duplications of marriage. It helps for them to start with an understanding of why things are as they are today – why church weddings are added to traditional or customary marriages. In a postcolonial hybrid setting these would be pertinent questions that may, to a very great extent, assist in shaping behaviour and theological and/or cultural convictions. The following twelve reasons emerged from the participants' responses.

#### **Sub-theme 3.1 People have a church wedding after a traditional marriage for celebration**

**Rudo** stated: *“Others wed to celebrate being kept by God and to celebrate getting a suitable partner and to be happy with relatives together.”*

**Loice** observed: *“People could have been poor when they got married traditionally but when they get blessed in their marital journey they may want to thank God for blessing them through having a church wedding. Such people wed with a big family already. So, they will have a church wedding just to enjoy themselves and celebrate. Yes. [a church wedding can be done just for the couple to enjoy themselves]. Yes, just to celebrate their long marriage together.”*

Mair (1969: xiii) notes that “a slackening hold of tradition is seen in the curtailment of the procedure for celebration of marriage, extending sometimes to an almost complete abandonment of the customary sequence of rites and observances. The gap is sometimes partially filled by an adoption of the external accompaniments of a European wedding, often at the cost of substantial and disproportionate expenditure on display and entertainment.” In other words, it can be said that with *mutimba* declining in prevalence, the church wedding has continued to gain momentum. The latter has, to a great extent, replaced the former among Ndaui Christians in Chimanmani. A critical interrogation of the reasons given for pursuing church weddings was very important for this study.

### **Sub-theme 3.2 People have a church wedding after a traditional marriage for God’s blessing**

**Herbert** considered: *“I think they want a church blessing. I think if they don’t have the wedding in the church at the beginning then I think they want God’s blessing on their union. And, from my understanding I think that’s good that they should have that.”*

**Godfrey** stressed: *“[the church wedding] it is done so that God may endorse that marriage. It is to have God’s blessings on the marriage. [If we marry traditionally] there won’t be any God’s blessings on the marriage. [People understand it that traditional marriage alone does not have God’s blessings].”*

**Batsirai** explained: *“If you want a church marriage, where you wed before God exchanging vows before God and getting God’s blessings, then that’s another step. Even when we marry the Ndaui way we will not have completed the process, we will still be half done until we have the church wedding.”*

There was an apparent perception among the participants that God’s blessing(s) could only be bestowed on a couple if they have a church wedding and not just a traditional marriage. This is a rather disturbing understanding of the events at play here. Fiedler (1998: 52), as quoted earlier, notes that the problem is in the church’s failure to take

the church wedding as the blessing of an existing marriage. Fiedler's sentiments were confirmed in the participants' responses. The general feeling was that the church wedding was the real thing.

It was evident that the missionaries did not educate their African converts about the development of church marriage in Europe. To the African in general and to the Nda Christians in particular, the church wedding has always existed since time immemorial. On the contrary, Hastings (1973: 66) argues that "The Church's marriage liturgy was, at least until the eleventh century, seen as basically an optional extra over and above customary marriage – an extra which, of course, good Christians would want to have as it provided the explicit blessing of God upon the union and instructed them in the duties they were taking on." The fact that the church wedding was and can be an optional extra is one that the Nda Christians are not conversant with. They would need to be exposed to these other alternative understandings over and above the missionaries' earlier indoctrination.

### **Sub-theme 3.3 People have a church wedding after a traditional marriage because it is regarded as God's requirement according to the Bible**

**Pretty** was of the opinion: *"The Bible says the wedding is holy. It is required by God. It is fulfilling what God said. If you do not have a church wedding it is called mapoto (cohabiting) although you did your mutimba. ... Yes, you will not have done what God requires."*

**Pride** said: *"I think it is God's statute. Holy matrimony before God seems to be a good thing that God desires. That is why after customary marriage people go further to have church weddings. That is what God wants."*

**Evans** concurred with the two above: *"I think it is to fulfil God's word."*

The misconception that the Bible teaches and encourages people to hold church weddings was found to be widespread. The missionaries made sure that the church wedding became a revered practice among the Nda Christians, so much so that they

actually think it is sanctioned in the Bible. Contrary to this view, Fiedler (1998: 57), as noted earlier, asserts that the New Testament does not sanction church weddings. In essence, therefore, the Bible does not advocate for or encourage Christians to have church weddings.

Fiedler (1998: 57) goes further to mention that church weddings are neither constituent parts of Christianity nor integral parts of African culture. Church weddings were, therefore, imposed on the Africans and for this reason Fiedler suggests that the church should abolish them. Hastings (1973: 71) adds to Fiedler's sentiments and asserts that "Theologically it is sufficient that if two Christians willingly and knowingly undergo a recognized form of marriage, then they are married; this is true even if there has been no specific reference in it to indissolubility or monogamy ...". The foregoing agrees with Hatendi's (1973: 148-149) assertion that, "It is not easy to say whether the features of a Christian marriage are Western or Christian in origin. Yet this writer is convinced that the negative attitude adopted and rationalized by churches stems not from the Bible or Christian theology but from prejudice."

The whole misconception is blamed on an overreliance on what church leaders teach in Africa. As Ngundu (2010: 160) notes: "most African Christians rely primarily on what their church leaders say as a guide to Church's teaching". He was not surprised to find that 89% of his informants also thought that church weddings were fully sanctioned by the Bible. The participants in his research also thought that wedding gowns, wedding veils, wedding rings and marriage vows were all rooted in the Bible.

According to Ngundu (2010: 36), "The uncritical acceptance of the European Christian marriage tradition and the unabated refusal to recognise customary marriage by mission-founded churches in independent Africa seems to stem mainly from a lack of sufficient understanding of the history of church weddings." All of these need to be redressed.

**Sub-theme 3.4 People have a church wedding after a traditional marriage because they have converted to Christianity**

**Aurthur** stated: *“They have church weddings say if they convert to Christianity after having married they will have to be joined in church (kubatanidzwa). They will be joined together in a church wedding according to the dictates of Christianity. What they will be doing will be kuzadzikisa so that they may get the marriage certificate that stipulates they are married. Some may wed even though the husband may not be a Christian so that the wife may be able to be given a church uniform.”*

**Dakarai** also mentioned: *“Others get married before they are Christians and then convert to Christianity where they will be taught the importance of a church wedding. Then they will wed in Church after having stayed together for some time already having been married customarily. These ones will have been taught to see the importance of a church wedding later on in their marriage. This is what I can say.”*

**Farai** concurred with the above sentiments as follows: *“So, because someone has converted and is living according to church principles he or she has to do as required irrespective of the fact that they had a traditional wedding.”*

**Fungai**, too, stated: *“The church wedding is done because people will have converted to Christianity. It is called a white wedding (muchato wechingezi).”*

**Loice** was of the same understanding. She said, *“They may wed in church because they may have married traditionally before they converted to Christianity, before they understood how important it was to have a church wedding. They possibly will have stayed together for some time before realising that wedding in church is an important thing.”*

Phillips and Morris (1971: 22) mention the fact that persons already married under customary law before their admission to Christian status may have to receive a church blessing. The question would be on the form that this blessing should take. I am of the opinion that they should just be prayed for by a pastor or by the elders. The opulent church weddings should not be part of the ‘church blessing’. In other words, church weddings as they are currently being done should not appear to be compulsory but optional for those who voluntarily want to have them. The Ndau Christians should be allowed to be ‘Ndau’ in their marriage practices as well without being unnecessarily

coerced into performing 'Western marriage rites' disguised as 'Christian'. There needs to be constructive critique of marriage practices in a postcolonial hybrid context to avoid the bias that normally favours 'church weddings' over traditional rites.

### **Sub-theme 3.5 People have a church wedding after a traditional marriage because it is a church requirement/rule**

**Tapuwa** was blunt. He stated: *"No, in fact what causes us to wed is because it is a church requirement. That's the reason, it a rule. (All in the group agree)."*

**Tapuwa** added: *"So, what is causing us to wed? I still want to go back to say it is a church rule. It's only because it is a church rule. If you don't do it, you are put under discipline."*

**Eunice** concurred with the above. She said: *"it is to fulfil the church rules that require that church members should wed in church."*

**Edwin** likewise said the same. He stated, *"...my thinking is that this is to satisfy the church rules or God's law – fulfilling the Christian way... Because according to the church rules, like say in our church- the United Baptist Church, the man and the wife should not have sex before they wed in church. So it is fulfilling the rules. I believe I am right."*

**John** explained: *"Ummm, one reason that may cause that is that they will be believers in Church and once they get married traditionally and start living together without the church wedding they are said to have fallen (kuwa) and are subjected to church discipline. They will have failed. So under discipline they will be in church without participating fully in the life of the church and in fellowship. The way to correct this is having a church wedding. Yaah, that's one. Others, it's just the same, they will have failed to wait for the church wedding perhaps citing that they do not have money for the wedding. This is because the church wedding needs to be organised together with a feast (dhiri). There should be celebrations and feeding of people and other expenses that these members will have seen cannot afford. So they get married traditionally and stay together. But still the church will treat them as having fallen (kuwa) or failed. They also will be disciplined and they won't participate fully in the church's activities until*



*they have also conducted a church wedding. We, in church, because we saw this problem that people were now looking at the church wedding as an expense, the Church said ngakubatwe penisera (holding a pencil). Muchato wepenisera meant there are no festivities, there is no dhiri. It is simply announcing three consecutive Sundays as per government requirements and permission would also be sort from the Native Commissioner as per requirements.”*

In line with the above, Madumere (1995: 27-28) mentions [that] “...the church marriage, which would follow the traditional and civil marriages, is generally regarded by most African Catholics as something to go through so as not to incur the displeasure of the Church.” Hatendi (1973: 148) notes that, “Sometimes this second stage [solemnization of marriage in church] is undertaken for bad reasons. The desire is to satisfy or please a missionary [or the church] in a land where the missionary by virtue of his colour and race holds official authority and is the key to employment, is great. At mission stations there are cases of teachers who refuse to comply and lose their jobs.” The same was found out to be true among Ndaou Christians in Chimanimani.

The fact that “church members and faithful church attenders are denied the opportunity to receive communion simply because they do not have a church wedding” forces Ndaou Christians to conduct church weddings (Fiedler, 1998: 50).

This has caused social stratification among Ndaou Christians and elsewhere in Zimbabwe and Africa. Fiedler (1998: 53), as previously mentioned, notes that “The ability or inability to afford a church wedding can be seen as the result of the process of social stratification in Africa. Some can afford it (or have to); most cannot. But a perhaps more important process of stratification takes place within the church which requires a church wedding as a precondition for either full membership or for the acquisition of special graces.”

The church’s teaching on church weddings is warped and should be reconsidered. Ngundu (2010: 36) does not mince his words on this. He asserts that “Mission-founded churches have no biblical and theological basis in labelling sexual intercourse after customary marriage sin. Moreover, mission-churches had no biblical and theological basis in refusing to recognise customary marriages as valid and legitimate unions for

church purposes ...". The United Baptist Church and other missionary founded churches should reconsider their position on traditional marriages and church weddings.

### **Sub-theme 3.6 People have a church wedding after a traditional marriage because church teaching encourages church weddings**

**Dakarai** reported: *"they will be taught the importance of a church wedding. Then they will wed in Church after having stayed together for some time already having been married customarily. These ones will have been taught to see the importance of a church wedding later on in their marriage."*

**Kumbirai** recounted: *"What normally makes people have church weddings is because they will be Christians. They will be members of churches that encourage their members to have church weddings... So, the pastors keep on saying it. Every now and then they keep on encouraging those that have not yet wedded to wed. They tell you you are lagging behind and should correct it by wedding. They say even when you go to the shop to buy tennis shoes you get a receipt but you paid for your wife but have failed to have a certificate that proves it. (Both laugh)."*

**Yeukai** concurred with the aforementioned. She responded: *"They will have heard a teaching or a message from the pastor. The pastor will have told them that it was not enough to just marry traditionally and that God had not blessed them. So they should wed for their marriage to be recognized by God and to be blessed by him."*

**Anesu** added: *"And also when I look at our fathers they learned when there were missionaries and they were also encouraged to have white weddings. So as a result that is what one would wish for his or her child."*

The very fact that churches encourage church weddings is itself very problematic. According to Fiedler (1998: 57-58) church weddings should be abolished for they are not needed to make a marriage Christian. He says marriages can still be blessed by

God even without a church wedding, perhaps by simply having a 'church prayer'. The issue has brought about much confusion in mission-founded churches. With Western cultural invasion Africa, Christians face difficulties legally, socially and morally in determining when an African couple is to be considered married (Ngundu, 2010: 2). This confusion is unnecessary and unwarranted. A postcolonial hybrid driven solution to the challenge is required.

### **Sub-theme 3.7 People have a church wedding after a traditional marriage for different levels of recognition and acceptance in the church**

Apart from the reasons mentioned above, Nda Christians hold weddings for recognition and acceptance in the church. These are almost like a status symbol. Those who wed in church are to be looked up to but those who do not are to be looked down upon.

#### **3.7.1 People have a church wedding after a traditional marriage for recognition of the marriage**

**Patrick** commented: *"Traditionally we say someone is married once he has paid roora.... This payment of roora is done whether one is a Christian or not. The girl is given to the man there but because some will now say because they are Christians they would ask for a wedding. They would say we just don't want to end by paying roora, we ask for a wedding. This is because if you take the girl at that stage to be your wife the church will discipline you. They will say you did not follow the right way."*

**Patrick** added: *"No, you are not married. So even after I have paid roora and the wife has been given to me the church will consider me not married. You are said to have married once you have the church wedding. So I will only be pronounced as married after the church wedding according to the church. They will again ask, on the wedding way, 'Who gives this girl to be married to this man?' The girl's father will say he gives the girl to be married and yet he gave the girl to me again on the day I paid roora."*

**Vimbai** stated: *“I think it is because most church doctrines do not recognise traditional marriages. They do acknowledge (them) for the sake of building relationships but they do not recognise them as marriage(s) when it comes to their doctrines. Yes. [People go on to have church weddings so that they can be acknowledged as married in the church] Even government institutions consider the white wedding because there is reference, because you have a marriage certificate.”*

**Farai** concurred with the aforementioned, remarking: *“One, after the traditional wedding, the church may despise the way you wedded traditionally. So, the church can say for it to recognise a couple as a married couple the couple should have a church wedding.”*

**Batsirai** retorted: *“Marrying in the Ndaou traditional way is marrying traditionally and it ends there. If you want a church marriage, where you wed before God exchanging vows before God and getting God’s blessings, then that’s another step. Even when we marry the Ndaou way we will not have completed the process, we will still be half done until we have the church wedding.”*

**Ronald** was precise. He said: *“The issue there is that our traditional way of getting married is viewed as if it is not good enough as a marriage.”*

**Evans** stated: *“the marriage will already be in existence. For the church to know about the marriage that you already had you then have to have a church wedding.”*

What further compounds the problems associated with church weddings is the fact that black clergy who happen to be marriage officers in missionary-founded churches were evidently convinced that such weddings were necessary for Ndaou Christians in Chimanimani, Zimbabwe. As has been mentioned earlier, there is need for such black clergy to reconsider the place of these weddings in a postcolonial hybrid context. It does not help much for them to further perpetuate the teachings of the missionaries before them without trying to make them more suitable to Ndaou Christians in Chimanimani. There is need to question the status quo just as Fanon (1986 [1952]: 232) mentions that his final prayer was that “O my body, make of me always a man who questions!”

### 3.7.2 People have a church wedding after a traditional marriage for recognition of the marriage and acceptance and access to serving in the church

**Aurthur** asserted: *“Some may wed even though the husband may not be a Christian so that the wife may be able to be given a church uniform.”*

**Kumbirai** declared: *“Like in AFM where I belong, to occupy offices in the church one needs to have wedded. Just to be given an opportunity to preach in church one needs to have wedded. For you to be respected in the church you should have a church wedding.”*

**Tapuwa** concurred with the aforementioned, stating: *“You won’t participate, you cannot lead prayer in church, and you cannot lead any church activity, you can’t do anything. You cannot partake in the Lord’s Supper. (All in the group agree).”*

**Simba** added: *“More often people wed after marrying traditionally ... because they want to occupy church offices. When you do not have a church wedding you cannot occupy those positions. That is why many people would wed in church. Yes. [It is for acceptance in church structures].”*

The church uniform that **Aurthur** mentions above is attire that was designed during the time of the missionaries for church members, whether male or female. Women in UBC wear a uniform that comprises of a black skirt, a red blouse with a white collar and white cloth at the end of the short sleeved arms, a white doek (headscarf) and a white apron. Men wear a red-cloth belt strapped from one shoulder side to the waist on the other side of the body. The belt has black ends on the part that is pinned together to secure it around or close to the waist. It is written across the chest in white a message that shows that the man is a UBC ‘belted’ member. The black, red, and white colours signify sins, Christ’s blood, and cleansing respectively. These uniforms are only given to men or women in UBC who have gone through a church wedding over and above traditional marriage.

The stratification caused in the church by requiring church weddings as a precondition for either full membership or for the acquisition of special graces is regrettable.

Requiring church weddings in order for one to hold certain offices in the church or to perform certain functions in the church enhances social stratification (Fiedler, 1998: 53-54). There is no biblical or theological basis for refusing to recognise traditional marriages as valid for participating in church functions (Ngundu, 2010: 36). Ngundu stresses that "... no convincing case can be made from Christian scripture for making church marriage a criterion for church membership, ordinances and admission to Christian ministry." Actually, the problem here is the fact that the European cultural conquest has continued even after formal colonialism ended. In a postcolonial hybrid context, as already established, the status quo needs to be questioned and corrected.

### **3.7.3 People have a church wedding after a traditional marriage for social acceptance in the church**

**Rudo** offered his thoughts: *"I think they have church weddings just for acceptance in the church. Because without a church wedding you are looked down upon but when you wed you are recognised and you can participate in church. Without a church wedding you see yourself as one who doesn't qualify. Yes, if you do not have a church wedding you are looked down upon and you won't be able to work for God. Whenever you try to do anything in church you are told you should sit down because you did not wed. Those that have weddings are considered for church tasks ahead of those that did not wed. Even when it comes to church uniforms one cannot be recommended to put on the uniform before having a church wedding. So I see church weddings as good because they make one fit well together with others. No, [people that do not have church weddings do not quite fit well in church activities] they don't. Because whenever they want to participate in anything in the church the other church members look down on them through their talking. They actually say you did not wed you should sit down."*

Madumere (1995: 29) makes the point that the church regards people who marry traditionally but do not wed in church as people living in sin. This is why they are barred from certain functions and why they are looked down upon. Surely, getting married traditionally cannot be so sinful!

### **Sub-theme 3.8 People have a church wedding after a traditional marriage for general social recognition**

**Janet** indicated that some people have church weddings for general social recognition. She said: *“I want to add. They may have seen that having a church wedding is much better than having a traditional marriage only. So, they may wed to make their marriage more respectable. Yes. [A church wedding is more respectable] People do not see mutimba as equally respectable as a church wedding.”*

Ngundu (2010: 167) found the same in his research. He argued, “... women without church marriages reported having to endure public humiliation in some church services. One such woman said that those married only by customary marriage are usually ridiculed from the pulpit, backed up by massive boasting from those who went through a white wedding.” This consequently gives one the urge to hold a church wedding simply to enjoy a positive reception and recognition in the church. Churches need to afford their members the opportunity to assert their identity and their cultural values and practices in a postcolonial context as long as they do not contradict biblically sanctioned expectations.

### **3.9 People have a church wedding after a traditional marriage because of the association of Christianity with Europeanisation/ westernisation**

It was clear from participants’ responses that Christianity and Westernisation have been confused among the Ndau Christians in Chimanimani. Fanon (1986 [1952]: 11, 25, 228) discusses at length the fact that black people want to be white and that mimicking white people (European language, clothes, furniture, and forms of social intercourse) contributes to a feeling of equality with the European and his achievements.

**Prisca** commented: *“I think it is because we are now Christians. We now want to follow that Western tradition because of Christianity. It’s like Christianity is now dominating in our culture. And because of that domination, not doing it is now like a taboo (laughs).”*

*It seems like the Western and Christian are knit together here, so if you do not do the Western way [the white wedding] perhaps you will not have done what you were expected to do.”*

**Simba** said: *“More often people wed after marrying traditionally because they are Christians.”*

**Simba** responded: *“I think you did not understand the question [with reference to a fellow focus group participant]. A person has married traditionally and he is married, that’s it, but because he is in a Christian church, especially these European churches like Baptist, Methodist and others, for him to be a full participant he should wed in church.”*

**Faith** concurred, as follows: *“Yes, that banquet in the Book of Revelations that we read about. So, people will be comparing it with the church weddings that we have nowadays. That’s why I am saying there is sort of a misinterpretation in which people think that the Western wedding is the way that goes in hand with what is mentioned in the Bible.”*

Mair (1969: 39) mentions the fact that church weddings, as they are conducted today, include most of the characteristic features of a European wedding. Fiedler (1998: 51-52), as quoted earlier, concedes that Christianity came with European culture and that church weddings are “a case of a naïve transfer of Western customs to Africa under the guise of a Christian ceremony”. In line with the above, Ncube (1989: 4) asserts that, “The colonisation of Africa by European powers had profound implications for African law and African legal institutions. African legal orders were completely disrupted and replaced by European legal systems.”

The very reason why traditional marriage is not highly regarded in missionary founded churches is because it fails to meet perceived Christian and/or Western expectations. According to Verryn (1975: 396), “... while [sic] traditional ceremony meets one set of requirements it does not satisfy demands made in terms of the Christian and western normative systems.”



Magesa (2004: 24) conceded that, “The form of marriage in the Catholic Church, for example, is still based on a Roman and Western cultural experience.” This is true in most if not all of the mission-founded churches in Africa.

The rule on church weddings was introduced in Europe at the end of the Middle Ages for pastoral reasons based on the circumstances of the time, but those circumstances did not apply in Africa. The rigid importation to Africa of the same rule is regrettable and more than unfortunate (Hastings, 1973: 71). In other words, the missionaries to Africa failed to differentiate between circumstances in their sending or home countries and circumstances in African contexts. They imposed that which they knew, from their contexts, thereby Westernising Christianity in African settings.

According to Ngundu (2010: 37), “The definitions of the validity of marriage changed and developed over the centuries of European history, and the outcome of such historical and theological debates on marriage in Europe was what mission organizations and colonial authorities imposed on African societies.” He (2010: 36) is unapologetic when he states that the uncritical acceptance of the European Christian marriage tradition stemmed mainly from a lack of sufficient understanding of the history of church weddings. The mission-founded churches should find ways to move out of such a quagmire.

Ngundu (2010: 39, 66) questions the validity of imposing legislation passed in Europe to meet specific European marital and social problems there on African Christians in Africa. He finds it unfortunate that European missionaries in Africa in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries viewed their Christianised customary marriage – a church marriage ceremony – as a necessary consequence of genuine African conversion to Christianity. Unfortunately, the trend lives on in mission founded churches in Africa to-date. Ngundu (2010: 150) sarcastically comments that “The missionaries seem to have been unaware of the fact that the form of Christianity they planted among the Africans was characterised by European trappings. For example, they expected every African Christian couple to have a white wedding in church.” As has already been emphasised before, the church today needs to reassess its theological conviction about marriages in a postcolonial African setting.

### **Sub-theme 3.10 People have a church wedding after a traditional marriage because it is regarded as a deterrent to unfaithfulness and polygamy**

Participants also expressed a conviction that church weddings protected marriages from the dangers of unfaithfulness and polygamy.

**Sekai** thought that: *“But maybe white wedding tries, or is trying to be faithful to each other... to be more committed to your partner.”*

**Linnet** expressed the same sentiments: *“It may be because the wife is faithful but the man is unfaithful so if they wed and he is controlled by prayer he settles down. Otherwise if he has a traditional marriage only he can marry five, six or even more. So if he comes to church he will be told that men should commit to one wife and women to one husband.”*

**Linnet** added that: *“Yes. [It is for some sort of security so that the man does not continue to take more wives] (All laugh).”*

Irrespective of what these participants had to say, I am of the opinion that faithfulness and remaining married to one woman cannot be forced from outside by an outward act such as a wedding in church. In my view, these are matters of the heart. I know many men that went through church weddings but proceeded to take several other wives and to be unfaithful to their wives.

The traditional and or conservative Christian African man is conflicted. He knows that traditionally he is permitted to marry more than one wife but the church teaching and the church wedding seek to bind him to one spouse for life. Mair (1969: 1) notes that, “The feature of African marriage which is perhaps most widely known to the general public is that polygyny – the legal marriage of one man to two or more women concurrently – is permitted.” This is in the subconscious of every traditional and/or conservative African Christian. Time and again, several Christian men in Africa, and among the Ndaui in Chimanimani, fail to live up to the expectations that come with having church weddings.

Mair (1969: 39) mentions that the civil ceremony and or the religious ceremony secure women's position as the only wife and enable them to sue for maintenance should the husbands desert them. However, church weddings in themselves cannot really deter men from having extra-marital affairs and, in some cases, parallel marriages unknown to the first wives.

**Sub-theme 3.11 People have a church wedding after a traditional marriage because church weddings have wider official recognition than traditional marriages**

**Vimbai** commented: *"People go on to have church weddings so that they can be acknowledged [as married in the church] Even government institutions consider the white wedding because there is reference, because you have a marriage certificate"*

**Anesu** concurred with **Vimbai**, responding: *"you qualify to get a marriage certificate that is offered these days, I have forgotten the Chapter but that kind of marriage, when we look at it, has an advantage... It was made an entry point to certain institutions. They would ask for a marriage certificate? [They] missionaries, like if one wanted to go to the college, they would ask for that and then looking for jobs, certain jobs they would also ask for it... Teachers' Colleges, Zintec Colleges as they would call them or Nursing Colleges. If you were married they wanted that... to some institutions [it is still a requirement]. Right now the young people are for the white wedding as well. The reasons behind being (1) you are protected if you are under that Chapter. (2) It is also easy to process documents. (3) And it also protects you from the second wife coming to claim property. (4) To the young ones, peer-pressure saying that ok I will get material things if I have a white wedding."*

**Nomsa** averred: *"In some workplaces they also sometimes require that you should have a marriage certificate if you are married... For municipalities to consider you for stands and houses in town you also need to have a marriage certificate. Without a marriage certificate you won't get a house... In South Africa where you are, I was told that even in banks they need that marriage certificate and that if you do not have one you will be treated as single."*

**Linnet** added: *“Another reason is because men want to protect their wife especially for the future when the men are no longer there. People gather wealth while they are still living but that wealth can be taken away by relatives if the husband dies when they did not have a marriage certificate. If she remains with a marriage certificate the wealth that she remains with will be safe. It will remain in the widow’s hands and her children.”*

The marriage certificate is, therefore, a very important aspect of the church wedding although it can also be obtained in civil courts. With the church wedding and the marriage certificate ridicule from the pulpit becomes a thing of the past (Ngundu, 2010: 167). As indicated above, the marriage certificate can also serve to make sure widows and the properties they remain with after the death of a loved one are protected by law. There should be other ways of making sure all married people can obtain marriage certificates without having to be forced into church or civil marriages.

### **Sub-theme 3.12 People have a church wedding after a traditional marriage for (convenience and) material advantages**

This is the last reason that emerged from the data.

**Anesu** mentioned one of the reasons for having church weddings as: *“Gifts that are given as wedding gifts.”*

**Kumbirai** added to the material benefits for having a church wedding when he said: *“Moreover, if you will be staying in town, people who are responsible for accommodation, even in compounds, consider people who have marriage certificates. If you find employment and tell your employers you wedded and produce your marriage certificate they give you better accommodation than someone who had mutimba because he does not have any proof. It is not written anywhere and anyone can lie and say he had mutimba even when he actually did musengabere (Both laugh).”*

In line with the above, Fiedler (1998: 56) notes that there is good reason to accuse the church of materialism, since many churches make expensive weddings a cornerstone

of spiritual achievement. Verryn (1975: 396) asserts that "... a church wedding also has social implications; the status of the couple and their kin are affected by the critical assessment of their dress, means of transportation to and from the church and other trappings, by their neighbours, associates and, in fact, by the community as a whole." In essence, therefore, there is a materialistic element to church weddings. These sentiments are in harmony with Hatendi's (1973: 148) observation that, "Marriage at Church also gives much needed publicity and is an occasion for conspicuous consumption." A postcolonial hybrid solution may help do away with these and other problems associated with a 'Western' church wedding.

#### **6.4 THEME 4: PERCEIVED RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TRADITIONAL MARRIAGE RITES AND CHRISTIAN MARRIAGE**

This is the second last theme that this chapter will deal with.

##### **Sub-theme 4.1 Different perceptions on equality of traditional marriage rites and Christian church weddings**

##### **4.1.1 Traditional marriage and Christian marriages are equal in terms of value (superior-inferior) and validity**

Some participants believed that traditional marriages and Christian marriages were equal in value and validity.

**Fungai** argued that: "Yes, [they are] *both are valued.*"

**Sekai** offered his view: "*I do not see any difference at all because it is just a man and a wife whether it is tradition or the white wedding. I think the white wedding is there just for convenience because we were Christianised so that we follow their culture but how far do we go with the culture I am not so sure.*"

**Edwin** stated: "*We cannot say there is anything bad or anything too good or anything that beats the other because the old way was the norm then. And the Christian way*

*that time was not there, in my knowledge. It was not there. That is why mutimba was valued. Today because people understand Christianity they now value the church wedding. That's how I know it. There is no bad way and there is no better way between them because the Ndau way was good back then before Christianity had spread. That is what I know."*

**Eric** concurred with the aforementioned and said: *"Neither of them is superior or inferior to the other. That's the way I look at it."*

**Batsirai** said: *"It's not about being married in an inferior or superior form of marriage, no, no, no, you have not done it the Christian way if you have not had a church wedding. I think if it comes out like this it is a better way of putting it."*

**Ronald** added: *"the church wedding is actually not seen to be superior."*

**Linnet** mentioned: *"We cannot say any one of them is looked down upon. Some people are not Christians and the traditional marriage is also very important to them. Those that go to church also say the wedding is also very important."*

**Simba** concurred with everyone else above in these words: *"I would say there is no difference between the two. Both are marriages and every married person whether they wedded in church or not are considered to be married by the community [in the eyes of the community]. Some people may just mention here and there that so and so did not wed but otherwise it is just the same. Even kids, when they are born, it is not possible to say they have not been born because their parents did not wed."*

Although the participants were of the understanding that the same value is placed on both, in practice the scales seem to be tipped more towards church weddings. This needs to be corrected in a postcolonial hybrid context.

#### **4.1.2 Traditional marriage and Christian marriages are not regarded as being equal**

Other participants were of the view that the two marriages were not equal.

**Tapuwa**, with reference to traditional marriage, said: *“It’s very inferior. Even in the society it is very inferior.”*

**Dakarai** explained: *“Yaah, the relationship between them is not equal. The first thing normally is surpassed by what comes afterwards. So what comes second seems better than the first. So, we Africans started with our own ways before the wedding came with the white people who also brought education and other better things than we had. So we say the church wedding is good because even if I have a traditional wedding (mutimba) when I go to Christianity I am taught to have a Church wedding because it is good. Why? Because when you have a church wedding they want you to know why it is important to have it. It is something that came after we already had our ways. I would say the first car that one buys will not be equally as good as the second car one buys. When one buys a second car he or she buys a better one not the same as the first one. So, the old one will be inferior compared to the new. So the old way of wedding that our grandfathers practised is surpassed by the church weddings that are being practised now. Yes, church wedding is superior to the way we get married customarily.”*

**Paida**, on traditional marriages, asserted: *“Yah, this is looked down on. Those that wed [in the church] are the ones that are considered to have done the right thing.”*

**Prisca** pointed out: *“The church wedding seems to be viewed as superior to the traditional marriage.”*

**Pretty** concurred with the aforementioned: *“Ummm, those that do just mutimba are looked down upon. It is looked down upon because they see as if it lacks something. It seems incomplete. Yah, [the church wedding, seems to be viewed as considerably higher or superior than the traditional marriage] you will be almost done with paying all your roora when you are allowed to conduct a church wedding. I see these other ways of getting married as ones that are looked down upon compared to the church wedding.”*

**Pride** said: *“Yes, the church marriage is the one that is held to be the official way of marrying. The customary ways are said to be cohabiting (kubika mapoto).”*

**Kumbirai** retorted: *“Our traditional marriage seems to be looked down upon many times because it lacks documentation. It is looked down upon and in some cases even when one is unfaithful in the marriage, if you approach the courts the traditional marriage is not held at the same level as the white wedding. The traditional marriage does not carry weight in the courts, before the lawyers. It needs to be complemented by a marriage certificate. So, many people even when they start with mutimba they end up having a formal wedding for it to carry weight because the traditional alone does not carry much weight.”*

**Eunice** considered: *“The church wedding has much greater fame than the traditional wedding.”*

**Loice** also said: *“Yes [the church wedding seems to be a bit superior], it has advantages compared to the traditional marriage.”*

Ncube (1989: 133), as noted in Chapter 2, mentions two types of marriages in Zimbabwe that are valid, Chapter 5.11 which is a monogamous marriage and a potentially polygamous customary law marriage under the African Marriages Act. These two are registered marriages. According to the law, the third type of “marriage”, the unregistered customary law marriage, is not a valid marriage. The fact that the traditional marriage is not registered may be the reason why it is perceived as unequal to a registered church marriage. The traditional marriage’s perceived inferiority may be as a result of the law. This needs to be critiqued. The Ndau need to be allowed to voice their concerns as far as current legislation is concerned. It cannot be that legislation continues to enact colonial laws so long after formal colonialism was brought to an end in Zimbabwe. Hybridity should be allowed to inform the position of different marriage practices and orientations in a postcolonial context.

#### **Sub-theme 4.2 Different perceptions on the interrelatedness of traditional marriage rites and Christian church weddings**



#### **4.2.1 Traditional marriage and church weddings are perceived as going together (complementary)**

Participants mentioned that traditional marriage and church weddings are complementary to each other.

**Paida** said: *“The two go together because usually it is impossible for someone to have a wedding without getting married traditionally. So, they go together.”*

**Rudo** also mentioned: *“I think they sort of go together [there is no looking down on one and not the other]. One should do both to feel a sense of accomplishment.”*

**Prisca** stated that: *“The way I see it these things are at par because you cannot have a Western wedding before you do what you are required to do traditionally.”*

**Patrick** explained: *“Yah, the wedding is important but emphasis should be put on saying once you have paid ... I wish there was a way in which Christians and African traditional marriage would merge somewhere in-between to make it simpler for people. Both will have been done but with less burden on the people. I emphasize that that they should be put together. Where the other happens the other should happen there as well. After roora and signing the marriage register as well as getting blessings the man should leave with his wife with their marriage certificate.”*

Fiedler (1998: 49) makes the point, “... without payment of bride price no Christian marriage could take place ...”. Verryn (1975: 306) also reported that “When one discusses the possibility of having a Church marriage without the traditional ceremonies, people simply tell you that it is impossible.” Both these support the complementary relationship between the traditional marriage and the church marriage or wedding. The continuous co-existence of the two needs to be assessed, informed by postcolonialism that seeks to offer the ‘colonised’ a voice and space to be heard and to self-represent themselves. As such, the research facilitates a space for the Ndaun marriage practices to be understood from a hybrid perspective.

#### 4.2.2 Traditional marriage is perceived as a prerequisite for a church wedding

The following participants also mentioned that the traditional marriage is perceived as a prerequisite for a church wedding. The latter cannot take place without the former.

**Prisca** added: *“The way I see it these things are at par because you cannot have a Western wedding before you do what you are required to do traditionally... Nothing can be said to be above the other, because you have to fulfil the requirements. The traditional marriage should come first and the Western one second. No, [one cannot end with the traditional without having the Western and you cannot do the Western without doing the traditional] you cannot. You cannot because for you to be allowed to have the Western marriage you should have paid because of this lobola and all these other requirements. (Both laugh).”*

For **Vimbai**: *“Ummm, the two have a close relationship. For the white wedding to have value you first have to go through the traditional marriage. So, the customary marriage is like the foundation on which the white wedding is built on. Mostly you can’t have a white wedding before you have a traditional marriage. Through the traditional marriage one then asks for permission to have the white wedding.”*

**Linnet** concurred: *“For one to have a church wedding he or she needs to go through the roora process first. Actually in the wedding ceremony the marriage officer asks for someone from the bride’s family who will hand her over to the groom. This shows the importance of roora. So in both the traditional marriage and the church wedding there is an aspect of asking for the girl’s hand in marriage with the permission being granted by her parents. We cannot say any one of them is looked down upon. Some people are not Christians and the traditional marriage is also very important to them. Those that go to church also say the wedding is also very important.”*

Both Madumere (1995: 30) and Daneel (1971: 248) indicate that one cannot marry in the church unless *roora* is paid and unless the parents endorse the marriage.

#### 4.2.3 Traditional marriage is regarded as being incomplete without a church wedding

Participants' perceptions were that traditional marriage is incomplete without a church wedding.

**Patrick** said: *"I see as if when one marries traditionally and does not wed he is considered as one who is not married the Christian way. Having the Christian wedding seems to be considered more important than marrying traditionally and yet one cannot wed without paying roora. In Christianity they say you are considered married when you have wedded and yet that is not where 'marriage' is. You wed because you are already married. It is not possible to just wake up and ask the marriage officer to marry you without paying roora. The relationship that should be there is that marriage is marriage. The blessing should be put together with the payment of roora. If it is not done on the same day then it should be explained so that it becomes less burdensome for the Christians. As it stands after getting married traditionally couples are still being treated as if they were not married according to church teachings. One can also see that many marriages do not quite last nowadays."*

**Pretty** responded: *"Ummm, those that do mutimba are looked down upon. It is looked down upon because they see as if it lacks something. It seems **incomplete**."*

**Tapuwa** stated: *"Yeeeees [they can actually be told that you should wed like so and so did]. If you come to the church having married customarily without a church wedding we will actually tell you that it is **not yet complete**, you need to correct it (gadzirisa). So, in other words, although customarily you are married, you are cohabiting (kubika mapoto)."*

Mair (1969: 39) emphasised that a growing body of African opinion at the time regarded traditional marriage as insufficient without a religious or civil ceremony. Fiedler (1998: 50-51) notes that even though marriage by eloping is a thoroughly acceptable form of civil marriage in North East Zaire, "...the churches usually conceive 'marriage by eloping' as sin, to be remedied by a proper wedding (though usually only low key since it is regarded as a 'second hand wedding'), preceded by due repentance on the side of the young couple." All this supports the perception that traditional

marriages are incomplete without a church wedding. This should, however, be challenged from a postcolonial hybrid perspective. The status quo cannot and should not be allowed to continue as it is.

### **Sub-theme 4.3 Perceived commonalities between traditional marriage rites and Christian church weddings**

In response to an interview question that asked for commonalities and differences between the two (traditional marriages and church weddings) participants offered the following perceived common elements:

#### **4.3.1 Both forms of marriage require the permission to marry from the parents**

**Linnet** remarked: *“Actually in the wedding ceremony the marriage officer asks for someone from the bride’s family who will hand her over to the groom. This shows the importance of roora. So in both the traditional marriage and the church wedding there is an aspect of asking for the girl’s hand in marriage with the permission being granted by her parents.”*

Granting of permission from parents is a very important aspect of both types of marriage. Madumere (1995: 30) notes that if *roora* is not paid and if the parents do not give permission for the church wedding to go on, the whole process, in most cases, stops.

#### **4.3.2 Both forms of marriage ceremonies are about joining families and a couple living together**

**Farai** said: *“Yah, I see a relationship between them. Both are about joining families and both encouraged living well together. So, I see them related in that sense.”*

Guy (2004: 84) asserts, "... marriage is not just a union of two people, it unites the families of the couple." Mugambi (2004: 238) also observes that the church wedding involves "...friends and representatives of the extended families of both partners." Daneel (1971: 248) adds that "... customary marriages are contracted by the respective families and not the individual parties ...".

In line with the aforementioned, Hatendi (1973: 135) states that, "Among the Shona, marriage is a union or alliance of two family-groups through their representatives, the bride and bridegroom." He (1973: 136) adds that, "Unlike the Western conception of family, which is nuclear, the Shona conception is extended and functional. The family is more of a socio-economic group of people who are related to one another by both blood and marriage. What matters more than the biological and affinal relationships is mutual responsibility and commitment. Marriage is an important means of bringing about this functional alliance and holding the parties together indefinitely."

#### **4.3.3 Both forms of marriage indicate connection to identity, i.e. clan and faith community**

**Anesu** declared that: *"How I would view it is there is a relationship between customary marriage and the white wedding. The relationship being that for you to enter a church you have to come from somewhere - you belong to a family and you also belong to a clan. You belong to a tribe and the relationship goes on like that. So you are not on your own. The requirement there is you still have to follow the customary laws because in there in the customary laws that is where we see the payment of lobola [roora]. That is where we see people visiting the in-laws through their relatives. You can't go there straight on your own. You have to ask someone to go before you, to speak for you. And when the lobola [roora] is being paid even if the family is living like a Western family they still have to do it in the traditional way, clapping hands, kneeling down and sitting down. So I see the relationship .... Then after paying and visiting in a traditional way then because they are Christians they will have to go back to the Church, find a marriage pastor and then do the white wedding. So there is a relationship."*

Mugambi (1989: 95) explains that "In the African cultural heritage, the marriage between two individuals was understood as a means of initiating or cementing the

union of the households and clans from which the couple belonged. Hence the individual man and woman intending to marry needed the approval of their respective parents and relatives.”

As already mentioned above, Mugambi (2004: 238) asserts: “In a church wedding there is normally a congregation, consisting of members of the parish, friends and representatives of the extended families of both partners.” This emphasises the importance of both the clan and faith community. The question, however, is not who should be involved or excluded but why there is need to duplicate marriages. This, as established, should be assessed and redressed.

#### **Sub-theme 4.4 Perceptions about churches’ views on the relationship between traditional marriage rites and Christian marriage**

The participants also expressed their views on the churches’ positions on the relationship between traditional marriages and Christian marriage.

##### **4.4.1 Some churches fully recognise traditional marriage**

**Linnet** stated: *“Other Christian churches accept the traditional marriage as enough on its own.”*

Being ‘enough on its own’ means they accept it without any expectations or the need to conduct a church wedding. African Initiated Churches are well-known for their unequivocal acceptance of traditional marriage for church purposes. Ngundu (2010: 36) is of the opinion that mission-founded churches should also recognise traditional marriages as valid and legitimate unions for church purposes. Refusing to do so, according to him, is caused by a lack of sufficient understanding of the history of church weddings.

##### **4.4.2 Some churches partly recognise traditional marriage**

**John** explained: *“We, in the United Baptist Church, took Nda traditional marriages and said we recognise this type of marriage. We recognise it and respect that people are already married. In our constitution, from the beginning from when the church gained autonomy, we recognise African customary law of marriage. Those who are married customarily are considered married and if they divorce it is considered as divorce by the church. But, with this traditional marriage they could not be allowed to participate fully in church activities. They were required, and that is what the constitution still says today, to then conduct a church wedding. Even if they have a marriage certificate from a magistrate or from a native commissioner they are still required to wed in church. Once they do this they are admitted back into full fellowship in the church. In a way, it was a mixture of approving of the traditional marriage and at the same time saying the traditional marriage was not enough. (Both laugh). It was said to be not enough. Perhaps that was a way of looking down on it. It was deemed to be incomplete until the church wedding was conducted. The church wedding is still required and today if a couple already has a marriage certificate from the magistrate or native commissioner the church will give them a Marriage Blessing Certificate which is recognised only by the church, when they come for a marriage blessing... Yes, you will not have married before God. You did not exchange vows before God. It is ummm unchristian, I don’t know, it seems like that’s what it means. You were supposed to appear before God as you get married but you did it alone there. It is considered to have been done in sin. And the church was not involved in it. You have just been joined kuvenyika (outside the church).”*

Ngundu (2010: 36), as established, is against such partial acceptance or complete rejection of traditional marriages for church purposes. He insists that there is neither a biblical nor a theological basis to such a position. Having neither a biblical nor a theological basis means the Bible does not sanction nor support the position and it does not have any anchor in ‘theology’ either. The UBC in Chimanimani should take these concerns seriously and revisit its theology on marriages.

#### **4.4.3 Some churches do not recognise traditional marriage**

**Anesu** made the point: [that] *“In the Church, yes. Well, [you won’t be accepted as married if you do not have the church wedding] they will accept you here and there but how we are seeing it these days, it is like even those people who have been married traditionally for say 20 years without a white wedding they are encouraged to go through a white wedding. And basically they will be linking that to the Bible saying that’s what the Bible says. If you are there without that certificate you are not married (she laughs).”*

**Tapuwa** too said: *“Yeeeeees [they can actually be told that you should wed like so and so did]. If you come to the church having married customarily without a church wedding we will actually tell you that it is not yet complete, you need to correct it (gadzirisa). So, in other words, although customarily you are married, you are cohabiting (kubika mapoto).”*

**Linnet** agreed: *“Yes, [those that do not go to church the traditional marriage is enough on its own to them, and that the church wedding is mostly valued by those that go to church], but some Christian churches do not value traditional weddings. Other Christian churches accept the traditional marriage as enough on its own.”*

As has been repeated in the foregoing discussion, this failure to accept traditional marriages in churches needs to be interrogated. The Ndau themselves should be listened to as far as this matter is concerned. One marriage system cannot continue to be privileged over another in a postcolonial context.

#### **Sub-theme 4.5 Perceived distinctions between traditional marriage rites and Christian marriage**

The participants also suggested differences between traditional marriage and Christian marriage.

##### **4.5.1 The one is Western tradition and the other is Ndau tradition**



**Fungai** stated: *“The church wedding is Western. Our Ndaui marriage is through mutimba. That is how different they are. Yes. [One is a Western wedding and another is a traditional wedding].”*

Ngundu (2010: 36) refers to the church wedding as a “European Christian marriage tradition”. For him (Ngundu, 2010: 150) the form of Christianity that the missionaries planted in Africa was characterised by European trappings, with the example of the expectation for Africans to have a white wedding in church. Mugambi (1989: 10) contends that “‘Christianisation’ of Africa is neither equivalent nor synonymous with ‘Europeanisation’ and ‘westernisation’.” In this sense, a revitalisation of *mutimba* may prove to be very logical and to suit the postcolonial dispensation very well.

#### **4.5.2. The church wedding is a Christian way and the traditional way is not**

**Batsirai** mentioned: *“(laughs and asks for a rereading of the question(s)). Well, the issue is not about looking down upon or being better or not. It is an issue of being married by God and in the presence of God. Whereas when one marries the traditional way without the church wedding one will not have married before God. It is not about looking down upon, no, no, no, the traditional way is not a Christian way, to be specific and clear about it. Because either you are married by Christian rites that were agreed upon for now until they have been revised but for now that is the way. Failing to do this when you are a Christian is failing.: Yaaah [have failed to marry the Christian way or according to Christian expectations], it’s not about being married in an inferior or superior form of marriage, no, no, no, you have not done it the Christian way if you have not had a church wedding. I think if it comes out like this it is a better way of putting it.”*

**Linnet** said: *“Yes, [those that do not go to church] the traditional marriage is enough on its own to them, and that the church wedding is mostly valued by those that go to church.”*

**Evans** explained: *“Where they differ a bit is in the fact that a person that ought to wed in church is someone who gave his/her life to Jesus. If someone comes to church just*

*expecting to wed in the church he is expected to give his life to Christ first. Yes, [the church wedding] it is for believers.”*

This distinction is flawed. There is nothing inherently wrong with traditional marriage both on a biblical and theological basis. There is no need for churches to discipline couples who consummate their marriages after traditional or customary marriage as is culturally expected and insisted upon by family members who would have played key roles in the whole marriage process (Ngundu, 2010: 36, 152). Such perceptions, fully loaded with ‘Western bias’, ought to be critiqued.

#### **4.5.3 Parents do not participate in celebration of their daughter’s marriage in traditional marriage**

**Joyce** responded: *“The church wedding is good because even your parents come to celebrate with you but in mutimba where you go to your husband at night your parents do not go with you. They remain behind. You go with other people but not your parents. (They all spoke together to say the parents do not accompany their daughter to her husband’s home in mutimba). They do not quite celebrate their daughter’s marriage as in a church wedding.”*

This, however, cannot be a reasonable premise for a perpetual coercion of Nda Christians into conducting church weddings.

#### **4.5.4 It is easier to divorce after traditional marriage than after church wedding**

**Aurthur** averred: *“The church wedding is difficult because once you get married you cannot easily divorce. You have to go to high courts to divorce. This is different from our traditional marriage where one could just say I am divorcing this person because I cannot take it any more for such and such reasons. Now the church wedding is based on vows exchanged during the wedding and it is not easy to break those vows after making them because you will have committed to stick together in difficult moments, in sickness, in riches and in all. That is how different they are.”*

The perception that traditional marriages were easily dissolved is also fundamentally flawed. Mair (1969: x) asserts that “It is sometimes implied, if not stated expressly, that the possibility of easy dissolution is characteristic of African customary marriage. But as a generalization this appears to be too sweeping.” She cites the fact that traditional courts had to preside over the cases and only if the marriages could not be mended was divorce allowed. Traditional courts refer to the courts that were presided over by a chief, a sub-chief or a headman. These courts still function among the Ndaus in Chimanimani but they are sidelined in numerous instances as many civil cases end up before magistrates and judges in Western-type courts.

Ncube (1989: 209) also disputes the fact that traditional marriages were easily dissolvable. He records that “In pre-colonial Zimbabwe the contract of marriage was legally and socially recognized as being a contract between two families and not between the two spouses themselves. The power to dissolve a marriage vested in the two families ... When the issue of the dissolution of a marriage arose the two families or their representatives met to decide on an appropriate course of action. They would agree to the dissolution of the marriage only if they thought the union had broken down to an unsalvageable extent.”

According to Goldin and Gelfand (1975: 147-148), “Traditionally divorce or dissolution of a marriage was arranged between the families of the respective parties... The respective families always tried to reconcile the parties and only agreed to a dissolution when this was considered inevitable.”

As such, this likewise is not a sufficient basis for a further perpetuation of church weddings.

#### **4.5.5 The church wedding is more expensive than the traditional marriage**

**Noel**, about church weddings, mentioned: “Yes, *one needs to have the money.*”

This distinction may also be open to challenge since *roora* has also become very expensive nowadays among the Ndaus of Chimanimani. Madumere (1995: 30)

mentions that “But today the greed of some parents, coupled with inflation, has turned the bride wealth into a burden on those wishing to marry.” Ngundu (2010: 156) finds both *roora* and church weddings to be expensive. He observes that “The main reason for the long interval between customary and church marriage ceremonies is the high cost involved in the *lobolo* [*roora*] transactions and in putting together an elaborate church wedding.” However, Fiedler (1998: 53), as noted earlier, concedes that the church wedding is expensive when he stated that “Some can afford it (or have to); most cannot.”

The church cannot continue to allow a financial overburdening of its people. A serious re-examination of the prevailing marriage practices may help provide solutions just as this study seeks to do.

#### **4.5.6 The traditional marriage makes people more vulnerable than church wedding**

**Godfrey** answered: *“Ummm, the traditional marriage and the Christian wedding yah are different. The church marriage normally, if proper steps are followed, the two getting married should not be sexually involved before they wed. The traditional marriage, well the two can be sexually involved before they are officially married. By so doing you see that this causes a lot, it does not give room to go for HIV testing and other things. So, they are different. The traditional marriage makes people vulnerable.”*

**Loice** clarified: *“Should anything happen, say the husband dies, even if the husband’s relatives take our belongings I do not have any powers to do anything. The church wedding has evidence. I can use my marriage certificate in the courts, it bears witness to the marriage that I had with my husband.”*

The greatest challenge faced by the traditional marriage is its lack of registration. The fact that people who marry just traditionally do not obtain marriage certificates is a great setback. According to Mugambi (2004: 239) “Customary marriage is not certified- no marriage certificate is issued. For this reason, it is precarious, because it does not enjoy the same level of protection as Christian Marriage and Civil Marriage.” Ngundu

(2010: 157, 167) also mentions the security that comes with marrying in church where one gets a marriage certificate. He finds the failure to issue a marriage certificate for customary marriage to be a problem.

Madhuku (2017) advocates for the registration of all marriages in Zimbabwe to protect the inheritance rights of widows. Such a move may help solve problems associated with the non-registration of traditional marriages in Zimbabwe.

#### **4.5.7 The church wedding has official recognition/ legal acceptance and is documented, which the traditional marriage is not**

**Kumbirai** elaborated: *“In being looked down upon, our traditional marriage seems to be looked down upon many times because it lacks documentation. It is looked down upon and in some cases even when one is unfaithful in the marriage, if you approach the courts the traditional marriage is not held at the same level as the white wedding. The traditional marriage does not carry weight in the courts, before the lawyers. It needs to be complemented by a marriage certificate. So, many people even when they start with mutimba they end up having a formal wedding for it to carry weight because the traditional alone does not carry much weight. As it stands it does not have any proof. A couple that married traditionally does not have anything on them that shows that they are married. The church wedding on the contrary has rings that stand as proof.”*

**Tapuwa** expressed his view, saying *“...although constitutionally all these weddings are mentioned or recognised, they actually say if you are married traditionally (customarily) the constitution considers you married. But you would see that the wedding that is recorded at the Registrar’s Office is the white wedding. Which means even constitutionally for you to be regarded as officially married you should have a wedding that is registered with the Registrar’s office. If you marry traditionally, have your mutimba after paying roora, and you stay together that is not recorded at the Registrar’s Office. Now, if you have a court (magistrate) wedding it is recorded. If you have a church wedding it also is recorded but the traditional one is not recorded. When you face any problem you have to provide proof that you paid roora to be considered to have been married. And also to add on, you can’t change your surname to your*

*husband's if you are only customarily married. To change your surname and get a new ID you need to produce your marriage certificate."*

**Mary** pointed out: *"The church wedding has a marriage certificate. The traditional marriage does not have a marriage certificate. People just know that you are married to so and so but you do not have a certificate to that effect, it's like you are officially not married (kubika mapoto). (All laugh)."*

**Loice** concurred, saying: *"Should anything happen, say the husband dies, even if the husband's relatives take our belongings I do not have any powers to do anything. The church wedding has evidence. I can use my marriage certificate in the courts, it bears witness to the marriage that I had with my husband."*

As has already been emphasised in this chapter, the traditional marriage's greatest setback is its lack of legal acceptance and lack of a marriage certificate. Mugambi (2004: 238, 239) draws attention to the fact that a wedding conducted in church consists of two aspects, religious and legal, something the traditional marriage does not have. The lack of certification in traditional marriages is worrisome. A postcolonial revisiting of marriage legislation in Zimbabwe may help to a very great extent.

#### **4.5.8 The church wedding is socially more acceptable than a traditional wedding**

**Mary** commented: *"The church wedding has a marriage certificate. The traditional marriage does not have a marriage certificate. People just know that you are married to so and so but you do not have a certificate to that effect, it's like you are officially not married (kubika mapoto)."*

**Tapuwa** added: *"There is societal acceptance as well. You would see that those that are married customarily, really the society does not see you as married, the society in general. Then the society, those that marry and wed, with a ring in your fingers, you have something that you walk around with that shows that you are married. The one who married customarily does not have anything."*

The Ndau society has come to regard the church marriage more highly than it does the traditional marriage. Verryn (1975: 396), as quoted earlier, indicates that, "... a church wedding also has social implications; the status of the couple and their kin are affected by the critical assessment of their dress, means of transportation to and from the church and other trappings, by their neighbours, associates and, in fact, by the community as a whole." These social implications of the church wedding cannot be ignored. The traditional marriage also needs to find ways of regaining social acceptance, but this may require a paradigm shift in theological understandings of marriage. The church needs to stop discriminating against traditional marriages.

#### **4.5.9 Church wedding includes receiving (more) gifts than with the traditional marriage**

**Salome** commented: *"Gifts are given in the church wedding but if you go at night in mutimba no gifts will be given to you. Yes, mutimba does not come with presents, you may get some little money but you do not get as much presents as in a church wedding."*

It is undeniable that people who are married in church receive more gifts than those who marry traditionally and end there. However, it also needs to be emphasised that church weddings are also much more expensive to prepare for than *mutimba*. In essence, therefore, one needs to spend a great deal in order to be given those many gifts that may not even match the expenses that one will have incurred in preparing for the wedding. Some people have fallen into the trap of expecting to get too much in terms of wedding gifts but ended up extremely disappointed with the returns on their 'investment'.

### **6.5 THEME 5: DIFFERENT VIEWS ON THE SUFFICIENCY OF TRADITIONAL MARRIAGES**

This is the last theme that will be discussed in this chapter.

### **Sub-theme 5.1 Traditional marriage is regarded as sufficient**

Some participants (both old and young and from both genders) strongly believed that traditional marriages were sufficient on their own.

**Sekai** said: *“Yes [as good as the church marriage on its own].”*

**Rudo** responded: *“Yah, I think traditional marriage is good enough without a church wedding because just having money paid for you is important. It is important for your parents to get something from your getting married.”*

**Aurthur** stated: *“According to Ndaun tradition, why I say it was enough was because what needed to be paid to the in-laws was paid. Everything that was asked for had to be paid, the cows, mombe yeumai, and so forth. The church wedding does not have any payment of roora or pfuma involved. Ours was based on the payment of pfuma to symbolise that the two were now married. It was enough as it was. It was strong and there were good relationships between families.”*

**Kumbirai** responded: *“Sometimes it can be said to be enough because it is recognised and respected by elderly people in the community. That is what is most important, for it to be accepted by the elders. They need to recognise you as their son-in-law. [Because] they accept you when you have paid roora. They also recognise mutimba and acknowledge that their daughter has gone in the right way.”*

**Samuel** asserted: *“Ndaun traditional marriage is enough because you do not lack anything if you marry traditionally only. Everyone knows you are married once you have paid your roora. It is enough even without the church wedding.”*

**Edwin** added: *“it is enough for a non-Christian but not for a Christian. For a Christian it is not enough.”*

Several scholars agree with the above sentiments. They believe that the traditional marriage is sufficient on its own. This is because couples who have fulfilled all traditional requirements are considered authentically married and valid in many African



societies including among the Ndaou (Fiedler, 1998: 57; Madumere; 1995: 27). Fiedler (1998: 57) asserts that churches should accept any genuine African marriage as a valid marriage and goes on to say this would be real inculturation.

Hastings (1973: 65) also supports the sufficiency of customary marriages. As he records, "For all the first centuries of the Christian era there was no special way for a Christian to marry. The customary forms of marriage among the Jews, Greeks, Romans, and every other people, provided the marriage forms of Christians as well." In other words, the Ndaou traditional marriage could provide the marriage forms of Ndaou Christians as well. Hastings (1973: 71) adds that it is theologically sufficient for two Christians to willingly and knowingly undergo a recognised form of marriage.

Ngundu (2010: 13) also mentions that African people regard traditional marriage as a full marriage. The church should acknowledge this and adjust its rules accordingly.

The above sentiments are in harmony with Bourdillon (1976: 45) who postulates that, "A Church marriage does not necessarily change the Shona perception of the union, and it is usually considered an incidental addition to a regular Shona marriage... A church or state marriage without the customary payment of bride-price is considered a 'cheap' marriage and the resulting union akin to concubinage." He (1973: 135) adds that, "Man and woman are said to be married among the Shona when they have satisfied certain customary criteria."

A theological position that emerges out of a postcolonial perspective would find space for such a revolutionary understanding of traditional Ndaou marriages as given by the participants.

### **Sub-theme 5.2 Traditional marriage is regarded as insufficient because it is not official (not legally registered) and does not have a certificate**

**Edwin** stated: *"Nowadays traditional marriage is not enough on its own."*

**Dakarai** said: *“I would not say it is enough because I talked about how the latter ways surpass the former. You see, in Ndaui marriages there are no marriage certificates. There is nothing written down to show you are married.”*

**Vimbai** also said: *“Yes, [so it is mostly for that reason that (I) think the traditional marriage is not good on its own] even in recognition before the law, the white wedding is recognised by the law whilst the traditional marriage is not.”*

The point has already been made that traditional marriage faces the challenge of non-registration. The insufficiency that the participants focused on was not premised on anything inherent in traditional marriage but rather their external non-registration. In effect, therefore, if traditional marriages were to be registered, the insufficiency cited above would disappear. Ngundu (2010: 167) notes that the problem with customary marriage is that, although it “constitutes a valid and legitimate union in African society; it does not issue a marriage certificate.”

### **Sub-theme 5.3 Traditional marriage is not regarded as sufficient for a Christian**

This sub-theme that emerged from the participants’ responses is based on a flawed premise. It has already been mentioned that it is neither theologically nor biblically correct to say traditional marriage is not Christian. While one may argue that traditional marriage has elements that were unchristian, such as the veneration of ancestors, amongst others, the churches were supposed to find ways of weeding these out so as to retain an acceptable Ndaui traditional-Christian marriage. Ngong (2012: 214) emphasises the need to have a Christian faith that has an African colour; that is inculturated, indigenised and Africanised. Meyer (2012: 154) too mentions that “religious scholars had a strong interest in Africanization or ‘inculturation.’”

Ngundu (2010: 36) and Hastings (1973: 71) both argue that there is nothing theologically or biblically wrong about traditional marriage. There are issues in traditional marriage that may need to be ‘weeded out’, such as polygamy, ancestor veneration, and others. However, to say traditional marriage is unchristian is misplaced and unfortunate. A postcolonial understanding of Ndaui marriages should

consist of an equal and a fair treatment of all marriages systems, irrespective of whether they are Ndaou or 'European'.

### **5.3.1 The traditional marriage is not regarded as sufficient for a Christian because it lacks God's blessing**

**Patrick** responded: *"As a Christian I would say it is not enough because... I also want to be blessed. I need that blessing."*

**Godfrey** added: *"Moreover, the Ndaou traditional marriage is not enough because it does not have God's blessing on it."*

**Prisca** agreed and stated: *"Yah [it is not enough to have only the traditional marriage without the church wedding], because in (my) opinion you do not get blessings from the pastor."*

**Batsirai** also said: *"Yes, and you have not received God's blessings."*

It would be a fallacy to argue that God's blessing is confined to the 'church walls'. The traditional marriage can be said to be blessed by God as well if African Christians rethink their theology. Hastings (1973: 66) asserts that "The Church's marriage liturgy was, at least until the eleventh century, seen as basically an optional extra over and above customary marriage – an extra which, of course, good Christians would want to have as it provided the explicit blessing of God upon the union and instructed them in the duties they were taking on." Hasting's assertion here implicitly shows that it is possible to be blessed by God even without a church marriage.

### **5.3.2 The traditional marriage is not regarded as sufficient for a Christian because it is not before God**

**Yeukai** stated that: *"It is not enough without the church wedding, because you have not been joined before God."*

**John** responded: *"It is not adequate on its own. A couple needs to marry before God. And no one should be afraid to come before God."*

The above suggests that God is not present in traditional marriages. Marrying before God cannot and should not be confined to within the confines of 'church walls'.

### **5.3.3 The traditional marriage is not regarded as sufficient for a Christian because it is not official/legal and is without documentation/a certificate**

**Patrick** declared: *"As a Christian I would say it is not enough because I still need that letter."*

**Godfrey** said: *"I do not see it as enough because you do not have registration of this marriage with the government, a tangible sign that this marriage exists."*

**Kumbirai** contributed, saying: *"Because they accept you when you have paid roora. They also recognise mutimba and acknowledge that their daughter has gone in the right way. But, like we said, it is not as strong as the church wedding because it lacks documentation. It will carry more weight once the church wedding has been added.... Yes, when you get a marriage certificate."*

**Anesu** added: *"If there wasn't any law that required that I would say traditional marriage is good enough. But the fact that the courts now, the country and the laws ..."*

Traditional marriage needs to improve in issues of registration. It should reach a point where traditional marriage is also, like church marriage, both religious and legal (Mugambi, 2004: 238).

### **5.3.4: The traditional marriage is not regarded as sufficient for a Christian because it is not sufficient for recognition for full participation in church**

**Anesu** explained: *“And how we get to know the type of marriage, especially in United Baptist Church we have groups like Vakweyi (men’s fellowship) and a group of ladies’ fellowship (Ruiyano). You get to a stage where you are mature in your Christianity and you should now put on a church uniform. They will follow to see if you have had a Chapter 37 (now Chapter 5: 11) marriage certificate with the pastor’s blessing at Church. If you didn’t have that there might be questions even though some people have managed to get a uniform without that, with the uuuummm with the court marriage, that’s our view at Church.”*

It is important to emphasise, as Fiedler (1998: 49) does, that the church wedding is also insufficient without the traditional marriage. Without *roora* payment no Christian marriage could take place.

As has already been mentioned earlier, traditional marriage meets one set of requirements but does not satisfy demands made in terms of the Christian and western normative systems (Verryn, 1975: 396). It is possible, though, to ‘tweak it’ to meet the Christian requirements but not the Western requirements. It is unnecessary for a Ndau traditional-Christian marriage to meet Western requirements. Africans in Africa should be able to have traditional-Christian marriages without being changed into African Europeanised Christians.

### **5.3.5 The traditional marriage is not regarded as sufficient for a Christian because traditional marriage lacks the social support advantages of a church wedding**

**Prisca** asserted: *“... besides that the Christian wedding has other advantages. When you wed in church you get Christian friends. Along marriage, if you meet any challenges, you now have people that can help you in a Christian way. Of which if you end with the traditional marriage you get helped traditionally but otherwise, since most people are now Christian the Christian culture is now dominating. It means you won’t get the necessary help if you only marry traditionally. If you wed in church you will always have people to help you. Even, the marriage officer, I understand is not just for*

*the wedding only but he continues with the couple. Wherever you may have challenges you can consult him.”*

In line with the above, Guy (2004: 105) considers that, “For a Christian, the community of the Church can provide a replacement for the extended family.” Again, this is not enough reason to continuously impose church weddings on Ndau Christians in Chimanimani.

## **6.6 CONCLUSION OF THE CHAPTER**

Chapter 5 dealt with the following theme:

- Theme 1: Marriage practices amongst the Ndau people

Following the phenomenological approach and postcolonialism as the paradigm that undergirds the study, the current chapter, Chapter 6, discussed the following four themes:

- Theme 2: Most preferred way of marriage amongst the Ndau people
- Theme 3: Various reasons for having a white/church wedding after traditional marriage
- Theme 4: Perceived relationship between traditional marriage rites and Christian marriage
- Theme 5: Different views on the sufficiency of traditional marriages

In Theme 2, four sub-themes were discussed. These were:

- Paying *roora* and *mutimba* were referred to as the preferred way of marriage amongst the Ndau
- Other than preferred, *roora* and *mutimba* are referred to as most acceptable, expected, well prepared, and right (proper) way
- *Mutimba* is the celebration and
- Elements and sequence of *mutimba*.

The above links very well with what was presented in Chapter 5; *roora* was mentioned as a common element in all Ndau forms of marriage and *mutimba* as the preferred way of celebrating the marriage that follows *roora* payment. *Mutimba* is itself

succeeded by accompanying the bride to the groom's home. It was emphasised that *mutimba* was the celebration of the marriage which was characterised by much feasting, an element that has been transferred to church wedding ceremonies, thereby making them extremely expensive for many Ndaou Christians. The different elements and sequence of *mutimba* were discussed and the importance of kinship ties was underlined in the process.

Theme 3 presented the different reasons for having a white/church wedding after traditional marriage. The following twelve reasons were given:

- for celebration
- for God's blessing
- because it is regarded as God's requirement according to the Bible
- because they have converted to Christianity
- because it is a church requirement/rule
- because church teaching encourages church weddings
- for different levels of recognition and acceptance in the church
- for general social recognition
- because of the association of Christianity with Europeanisation/Westernisation
- because it is regarded as a deterrent to unfaithfulness and polygamy
- because church weddings have wider official recognition than traditional marriages
- for (convenience and) material advantages.

It was established that most of the reasons for conducting church weddings after traditional marriages were based on a lack of understanding of the history of marriages in Europe, from where the SAGM missionaries originally came. There were many reasons that were also based on flawed understandings of bible teachings. It was reiterated that church weddings had neither a biblical nor a theological basis. As such, black clergy in missionary-founded churches need to rethink their theology on church weddings and the place of traditional marriages among the Ndaou Christians of Chimanimani, Zimbabwe.

Theme 4 arose as a result of participants' responses to the question that required them to give their perceptions on the relationship between traditional marriage rites and

Christian marriage. It was established that the participants held varied perceptions about the said relationship. The following five sub-themes were discussed:

- Different perceptions on equality of traditional marriage rites and Christian church weddings
- Different perceptions on the interrelatedness of traditional marriage rites and Christian church weddings
- Perceived commonalities between traditional marriage rites and Christian church weddings
- Perceptions about churches' views on the relationship between traditional marriage rites and Christian marriage
- Perceived distinctions between traditional marriage rites and the Christian marriage.

The many different categories under these sub-themes helped show that the participants' perceptions about the relationship between traditional marriages and Christian marriages were diverse.

The last theme that this chapter considered had to do with the sufficiency of traditional marriages. Here again the participants expressed different views. Some maintained that traditional marriages were sufficient. Others were convinced that traditional marriage is not sufficient (on its own) because it is not legally registered and it is without a marriage certificate. Yet others were of the view that while traditional marriages may be sufficient for non-Christians they were not adequate for a Christian.

The following were reasons given to support the latter view:

- Traditional marriage lacks God's blessing
- Traditional marriage is not before God
- Traditional marriage is without a marriage certificate
- It is not sufficient for recognition for full participation in the church
- It lacks the social support advantages of a church weddings.

Like the perceptions identified in Theme 3, some of the views arising in Theme 4 were based on misconceptions and this was addressed in the chapter.



It was emphasised in this chapter that Ndau marriages today need to be understood from a postcolonial hybrid perspective. They cannot continue to be subjected to the constraints of 'European' church weddings. There needs to be a way of allowing the two to co-exist without necessarily holding one marriage form in higher esteem than the other or that it exists to the detriment of the other. The combined traditional-Christian marriage ceremony that this thesis recommends may be a useful way of reconciling the two.

Chapter 7 provides the remaining two themes that emerged from the research:

- Theme 6: Thoughts on the expenses of church weddings
- Theme 7: How participants married and reasons therefor.

## **CHAPTER 7**

### **RESEARCH FINDINGS AND LITERATURE CONTROL – PART 3**

#### **7.1 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter is the third and final chapter in which the presentation of the research findings and the literature control will be continued. Like the preceding chapters on the research findings, it is informed by the phenomenological approach and postcolonialism as the paradigm that underpins the study.

Chapter 5 dealt with the following theme:

- Theme 1: Marriage practices amongst the Ndaou people

Chapter 6 discussed the following four themes:

- Theme 2: Most preferred way of marriage amongst the Ndaou people
- Theme 3: Various reasons for having a white/church wedding after traditional marriage
- Theme 4: Perceived relationship between traditional marriage rites and Christian marriage
- Theme 5: Different views on the sufficiency of traditional marriages

The current chapter addresses the remaining themes:

- Theme 6: Thoughts on the expenses of church weddings
- Theme 7: How participants married and reasons therefor

Just as the previous two chapters did, this chapter will use literature control for data verification. Each theme, sub-theme, category and sub-category will be supported by storylines and quotes from scholars where possible. Storylines and scholars' quotes may be repeated in support of different points if they are deemed relevant for those different points.

## 7.2 THEME 6: THOUGHTS ON THE EXPENSES OF CHURCH WEDDINGS

There was a general overall perception among the participants that church weddings are expensive. Mair (1969: 39) notes that “The type of marriage celebration regarded as desirable today involves a considerable amount of feasting and display, including most of the characteristic features of a European wedding.” It is this feasting and display that make the church wedding very costly.

### 6.1 Church weddings are (too) expensive

Participants were quick to point out that church weddings have become excessively expensive.

**Sekai** said: *“Yaah, that’s too much. It is discouraging to young people.”*

**Dakarai** also said: *“Oh, I think it is unnecessary expense ...”*

**Sekai** also observed: *“Church weddings are expensive.”*

**Edwin** made the point: *“It is a lot for sure. It is a lot of money because to be able to have a wedding nowadays it now means you need to have a lot of money.”*

**Anesu** also stated: *“[It becomes] Too expensive, extremely expensive.”*

**John** said: *“Yes, I say the expenses being incurred nowadays actually distort people’s understanding of what a wedding is. It now seems like a wedding are those expenses or things. Without these ‘things’ there seems to be no wedding. It’s a wrong concept that is bad.”*

**Prisca** added: *“According to my own view, the budget is too much.”*

**Herbert** recounted: *“I think I just mentioned that some of them are very expensive.”*

**Kumbirai** concurred as follows: *“I think a lot of church weddings come with great expenses.”*

Fiedler (1998: 53, 57) and Verry (1975: 396) both acknowledge that church weddings are very expensive. Fiedler actually makes it clear that “a Christian marriage is out of reach for most Christians, however faithful Christians they might be otherwise (unless they are rich in material things)”. He adds that the church should abolish the church wedding and stresses that in keeping the church wedding as the standard, the church pleases the few and burdens the many. The current study does not call for an abolishment of church weddings, but it too maintains that something needs to be done to curtail the mentioned runaway expenses.

### **Sub-theme 6.2 Church weddings favour the rich and are a burden for and discriminate against the poor**

**John** responded: *“The way weddings are being done favour the rich. It is easy for those that have money. To those that do not have it is a burden of some sort.”*

**Edwin** emphasises: *“it is really heavy (a burden) for the poor.”*

**Paida** mentioned: *“The church wedding favors the rich because the expenses are not an issue to them and not the poor who end up saying they can’t wed because of the expenses.”*

**Prisca** also stated: *“... the way weddings are being done today seems to favour those that have money whilst it seems to discriminate against the poor.”*

**Godfrey** contributed, saying: *“...the way weddings are being done nowadays may discriminate against the poor who may end up feeling that they cannot afford the church wedding. What people are considering to be the wedding is not the wedding. The food, expensive clothes, expensive deco, expensive hired cars, expensive venues, all these may discourage the poor from wedding and yet that is not what the church wedding is all about.”*

**Joyce** conceded, saying: “Yes, [it can be discriminatory against the poor] *some people say that. They say they cannot afford church weddings.*”

In line with the above, Fiedler (1998: 52) notes that “very few can afford a church wedding” [in Kenya and North Eastern Zaire], and added that “but for those who can afford it, it is a major status symbol.” He also observes that 1-2 years’ work are required [in North Eastern Zaire and in Kenya] just to finance the church wedding. Consequently, Fiedler submits that church weddings have become a major problem for the church for they, amongst other issues, cause social stratification. His sentiments suit the situation as regards church weddings among the Ndaou of Chimanimani, Zimbabwe. Everything is just the same as he discovered in North Eastern Zaire and in Kenya.

Ngundu (2010: 149) also stresses that many African couples find it very difficult to put a church wedding together because of the cost of the bridal gown, many attendants, wedding cakes and marriage rings. It is in this context that the question of the necessity of duplicating marriages needs to be raised even more forcefully. The UBC and other churches ought to listen to the voices of the formerly colonised adherents as far as their perceptions of marriage are concerned.

### **Sub-theme 6.3 Expenses of a church wedding have various negative consequences**

#### **6.3.1 Expenses of a church wedding are a deterrent to people getting married**

**Sekai** said: “Yes [they don’t have the money to get married, it has become too expensive].”

**Edwin** stated: “...the expenses can stand in the way [of people who want to wed or delay their weddings]. Some people cannot afford it..... And there are quite a number of people who fail to wed because of lack of resources.”

**John** added: *“Others end up failing to wed and impregnate their women and then plan to have church weddings later.”*

**Paida** said: *“I think those expenses are the ones that cause others not to have church weddings.... So, I think those expenses causes other people not to wed because everyone will be expecting something of a high class.”*

**Prisca** asserted: *“It can possibly affect other young couples who may want to wed but cannot afford such expensive weddings. So, by so doing you see that young couples fail to wed because they can’t afford expensive weddings. They impregnate and the girls elope, that’s it.”*

**Godfrey** declared that: *“the way weddings are being done nowadays may discriminate against the poor [who may end up feeling that they cannot afford the church wedding]. What people are considering to be the wedding is not the wedding. The food, expensive clothes, expensive deco, expensive hired cars, expensive venues, all these may discourage the poor from wedding and yet that is not what the church wedding is all about.”*

**Loice** added that: *“some people may want to wed but they are afraid [of the expenses that they may incur]”*

**Edwin** stressed that: *“Yes, yes, this is the main point there [this forces other people to start living together before they have been able to have a church wedding because of the expenses]. If it were easy everyone would do it but it is too expensive and a lot of people cannot afford it.”*

There were strong sentiments expressed by the participants to support the view that church wedding related expenses acted as a deterrent to some who would want to marry but cannot afford to shoulder the expenses. Scholars’ arguments to this effect have already been given above.

### 6.3.2. Expenses of a church wedding are a deterrent to church weddings

**Paida** mentioned that: *“I think those expenses are the ones that cause others not to have church weddings ...”*

Madumere (1995: 50) notes that some couples are reluctant to marry in church because of the exorbitant cost of church weddings. For Madumere (1995: 34) “It is unfortunate that the cost of Christian weddings has become so expensive in most areas of Africa that it now constitutes an obstacle to marriage in the Church.” One gets an impression that church weddings are doing more bad than good for the church.

### 6.3.3. Expenses of a church wedding delay some people to getting married

**Edwin** said: *“the expenses can stand in the way [of people who want to wed or delay their weddings]”*

**John** stressed that: *“Others go around it by delaying the wedding so that they may have enough time to prepare. Others end up failing to wed and impregnate their women and then plan to have church weddings later.”*

**Patrick** responded: *“Waiting for long will cause me to be disciplined [by the church] because I may fail to wait to get to the wedding before living with my wife.”*

Madumere (1995: 34) and Fiedler (1998: 54) both mention that church weddings are postponed or delayed for lack of money. Many African Christians decide to save enough money before having a church wedding. Fiedler (1998: 54) stresses that the perception is that it would be shameful to have a church wedding without a feast.

It is significant to understand how the Ndaui make sense of the two marriage systems in a hybrid context, just as this study seeks to do too.

#### **6.3.4. Expenses of a church wedding are a reason for a lot of the cohabitation**

**Sekai** mentioned that: *“Yaah, it discourages them and it encourages live-ins, cohabiting, because they don’t have the money.”*

**Sekai** added that: *“... and sometimes it stops these young people. That is why there is a lot of live-ins because they do not have the money.”*

**Edwin** concurred: *“this forces other people to start living together before they have been able to have a church wedding because of the expenses.”*

According to Magesa (2004: 25) cohabitation is rife in African societies today. Madumere (1995: 30) stresses that many people who wish to marry “being unable to wait for a long period, they start cohabiting since they cannot marry in the church unless the dowry is paid and the bride’s parents endorse the marriage.” There is, therefore, a huge problem of cohabitation in Africa most probably triggered by unfavorable and unfortunate church marriage rules. This can easily be redressed with a postcolonial reassessment of marriages that favour a hybrid setting.

#### **6.3.5. Expenses of a church wedding are a reason for a lot of premarital pregnancies**

**John** mentioned: *“Others end up failing to wed and impregnate their women and then plan to have church wedding.”*

**John’s** quote here helps show that some participants strongly believed that church wedding expenses were a cause for premarital pregnancies. This is the pragmatic approach that was mentioned in earlier chapters where those who want to marry go for the easiest option in their circumstances, only to pay *roora* and wed in church later on in their lives.

#### **6.3.6. Expenses of a church wedding are a reason for elopement**



**Prisca** observed: *“It can possibly affect other young couples who may want to wed but cannot afford such expensive weddings. So ... because they can’t afford expensive weddings ... and the girls elope, that’s it.”*

Fiedler (1998: 50) remarks that marriage by eloping has become a rule because of the high bride-wealth prices, and subsequently, high church wedding costs. This cannot continue to escape the church’s attention in Chimanimani, Zimbabwe.

### **6.3.7. Expenses of a church wedding encourage marrying for money**

**Sekai** stated that: *“... because you may encourage your daughter to look for a rich man or encourage your son to look for a rich woman. But that is not love. You should begin from the low ground building up, if you have riches okay, you have them, if you don’t you still live and you live happily and respect each other.”*

The obsession with expenses associated with weddings, together with the material advantages of marrying someone who can afford the expensive weddings, is evidently driving some, women especially, to marry for money.

### **6.3.8. Expenses of a church wedding put the bridegroom into debt**

**Anesu** reported: *“of late I viewed marriages, and I have discovered that some would not even have strong financial backgrounds and they suffer a lot of stress because they are trying to do what others are doing and that’s exactly what we expect to see. So they run here and there trying to ... at the end of the day, the day comes when the person is already stressed.”*

**Nomsa** added: *“You end up getting stress.”*

**Kumbirai** mentioned: *“There are a lot of expenses. We saw others getting very disappointed after the wedding. [They lost their joy after the wedding] they start fighting in their new home and actually they sometimes fail to go where they had expected to go for honeymoon because they will not have received as much as they thought they*

*will get in presents or wedding gifts ... they expected to get a lot of money from the people and that money did not come as was expected.”*

Mair (1969: 39), Ngundu (2010: 157) and Madumere (1995: 34) mention the fact that less well-to-do people end up in debt because of ‘the cost of the wedding’. As Madumere (1995: 34) asserts “Quite a number of couples, enthusiastic about marrying in the church, have had to borrow money so early in their married life so as to defray the cost of their wedding.” Ngundu (2010: 157) notes that the problem lies in the fact that African Christians who insist on expensive weddings associate meaningful marriage ceremonies with a white church wedding, with the result that they end up in debt.

This thesis considers the above as an unnecessary burden on Ndaun Christians. A hybrid solution to marriage issues is more than warranted.

#### **6.3.9 Expenses of a church wedding cause stress**

**Anesu** answered that: *“Of late I viewed marriages, and I have discovered that some would not even have strong financial backgrounds and they suffer a lot of stress because they are trying to do what others are doing and that’s exactly what we expect to see. So they run here and there trying to ... at the end of the day, the day comes when the person is already stressed.”*

**Nomsa**, as quoted above, also said: *“You end up getting stress.”*

It is sad that marriages and church weddings have been driven into being stressful affairs. This cannot be right and the ‘run-away expenses’ need to be curbed. A clear understanding of the ‘essence’ of marriage may help offer redress.

### 6.3.10 Expenses of a church wedding distort the meaning of a wedding

Participants mentioned one major problem associated with expensive church weddings. These regrettably distort the meaning of a wedding. People focus on the less important elements of the wedding, the material aspects of it, and in the process miss the important aspect or the essence of it.

**John** pointed out: *“... the expenses being incurred nowadays actually distort people’s understanding of what a wedding is. It now seems like a wedding are those expenses or things. Without these ‘things’ there seems to be no wedding. It’s a wrong concept that is bad.”*

**Prisca** observed that: *“expensive weddings ... The youths we have now grow up thinking that’s the way it has to be done – you have to be flashy. They don’t know what the wedding really stands for. The meaning has been lost.”*

There apparently is a significant distinction in practice between a less expensive and simple church wedding and a more popular expensive church wedding. The latter is more appealing and it would seem that everyone longs to have that one. According to Mair (1969: 40), “The quiet wedding is an unwelcome alternative to the elaborate type, which alone is regarded as a ‘real’ wedding.” Ngundu (2010: 157) regrets the fact that “Instead of focussing on the value and significance of a Christian marriage, the expensive weddings focus on the wealth and importance of the couple.”

### 6.3.11 Expenses of a church wedding add pressure to marriages

**Anesu** stressed that: *“Because how I see it, it’s because of pressure that people run after things and some of them end up having debts and at the end of the day the purpose of marriage is defeated. Because as soon as they get their Chapter 37 (Chapter 5: 11), two months down the line they are fighting. However, if the wedding was imposed upon the two young people by either pair of parents that forced wedding could become a source of conflict when money is hard to come by.”*

In line with the above, Fiedler (1998: 52) makes it clear that “Church weddings have become even more a problem for Christian marriage ...”.

Consequently, church weddings have undesirable negative effects as amply demonstrated in the foregoing presentation. All this can be justifiably blamed on the church’s failure to reconsider the missionaries’ position on traditional marriages in a postcolonial context.

#### **Sub-theme 6.4 Expenses of a church wedding also have positive effects**

The situation is not all dark and gloomy, though. The participants also had the following positive things to say about the expenses of church weddings. The positive and the negative effects that this thesis presents are based on what the participants perceived to be positives or negatives.

##### **6.4.1 Expenses incurred create a sense of achievement**

**Dakarai** stated: *“... when someone forks out a lot of money to prepare for a wedding when you are done you feel relieved [satisfied].”*

As already indicated, Fiedler (1998: 52) notes that “... very few can afford a church wedding, but for those who can afford it, it is a major status symbol.” It gives the couple which manages to successfully have it a great sense of achievement and importance. Verryn (1975: 396) likewise points to the issue of the status of the couple associated with the church wedding.

##### **6.4.2 Expenses incurred for a church wedding make for valuing marriage and partner more**

**Dakarai** argued: *“A lot of money that is used in preparation for church weddings has a lot of things that it is useful for. ... When you have spent a lot of money you value*

*the wedding because you know it was draining. Even when you argue in the house you are not quick to tell your wife she should go because you know you paid a lot for the wedding. It is like when you build a house. When you are done building it you really know how expensive it was to build and you want it to be taken good care of. The same applies to a wife who you had an expensive wedding with. When you think of what you spent for your wedding you value your wife than one you took say for US\$200. When you get US\$500 in your pocket and you see another woman you feel like you have a lot and you feel like you can marry another woman. A lot of money helps in a lot of things especially so that you value your spouse more. You will always remember that you sweated (worked hard) to be with your spouse.”*

**Rudo** too said: *“So, sometimes I think it is good to sacrifice for something you want because tomorrow you will benefit from it. Ummm, [one benefit] like if God blesses you and gives you a good wife you enjoy your marriage. You enjoy your marriage and have your children. So these are the benefits. Yes. [It is worth the sacrifice].”*

**Yeukai** emphasised that: *“Something that doesn’t have any expense is not valuable. There should be an expense. Yes, [the expense is meant] to make it valuable. And the husband also sees that there was expense involved. Without expense the man will keep on taking more wives because it doesn’t matter, the marriage does not have that value to him. (All laugh).”*

The aforementioned is one way of looking at expensive weddings. However, value is not necessarily always tied together with expense. One can still benefit from a valuable marriage without having to spend excessively on a church wedding. It remains very important to critically assess whether these expenses should be incurred at all, especially considering that traditional marriages will have taken place some time before these expensive church weddings.

#### **Sub-theme 6.5 Various explanations/reasons/causes are given for having expensive weddings**

Participants gave several reasons why Ndaou Christians in Chimanimani have expensive church weddings.

#### **6.5.1 Choice: People choose to have expensive weddings**

Some participants categorically stated that having expensive church weddings was a matter of choice.

**Pride** said: *“No, it is not required [that one spends a lot]. It is out of choice.”*

**Fungai** agreed: *“Yes, [making it expensive] it is out of choice.”*

**Salome** also drew attention to the issue of choice: *“Is it not a person’s choice? The one who has the money can use a lot of money because he or she affords it.”*

**Linda** said: *“Like what has been said, it is really a choice. If you ask marriage officers they tell you that you can use bread where the cake is normally used or sadza (thick porridge) and you get joined. People are however worried that it will be embarrassing to use sadza (thick porridge) or bread that is why they then fall into debt but at least you can keep it simple.”*

Although the participants mentioned choice as one of the reasons for having expensive church weddings, there is an element in which having less expensive weddings seems to be looked down upon. Fiedler (1998: 54), as noted earlier, rightly mentions that the perception is that to have a church wedding without the appropriate wedding feast would be a shame. In other words, it is embarrassing to have a less expensive wedding among the Ndaou Christians in Chimanimani; to a very great extent, it would seem to be a public display of lack and poverty. This fact further adds value to the necessity of reconsidering marriages among the Ndaou in Chimanimani in a postcolonial hybrid context.

## 6.5.2. African and Western cultural reasons

### 6.5.2.1 Own communal culture (Ubuntu)

**Edwin** explained: *“Now we, because our culture, we are people who do things communally (Ubuntu). We want to do things together. So you find that if one is wedding he is supposed to pay pfuma and yet he should make sure that all relatives are invited to the wedding because he cannot leave them out. You need to invite all relatives and you need to feed them all.”*

This point has been stressed in earlier chapters where the importance of family and kinship ties were emphasised. The Ndau enjoy celebrating different rites of passage as a community and in these they master the art of feasting together. This has been transferred among the Ndau to church wedding celebrations, thereby making them very expensive ventures.

### 6.5.2.2 The expenses are a result of Western cultural influence

**Anesu** responded: *“It is societal influence when we look at what is happening these days, how people are running after material things and Western culture influence, the diaspora influence.”*

The issue of mimicking the white people surfaces here as well. The perception among the Ndau is that white people have lavish church weddings. According to Fanon (1986 [1952]: 18) “The colonized is elevated above his jungle status in proportion to his adoption of the mother country’s cultural standards. He becomes whiter as he renounces his blackness ...”. Ndau people in Chimanimani have adopted the Western cultural values and standards, so much so that they find nothing wrong with imitating the Western cultural values even if doing so is strangling them. The fact that conducting a church wedding will make one look more or less like a European in Western wedding attire seems to be reason enough for many to want to pull off expensive church weddings. This is why Fanon (1986 [1952]: 11, 228) asserts that the

black man wants to be white and that “For the black man there is only one destiny. And it is white.”

### **6.5.3. The expenses are the result of social pressure and socialisation to meet expectations and impress people**

**Samuel** stated: *“It is just to **please** people. I do not see any other reason.”*

**Anesu** said: *“I, how I see it, it’s because of **pressure** that people run after things and some of them end up having debts. And then what it does as well to some people who can’t afford in the society, who can afford a little, society is sort of giving them pressure saying oh that marriage, that wedding was a poor wedding, no transport, the food was bad. Yah, we do put the pressure on the people.”*

**John** argued: *“... but it is also to do with the **times**. (Both laugh). The times we now live in force people to do things in a certain way.”*

**Vimbai** said: *“So, it is becoming a **routine** among the Ndaue people and in Zimbabwe in general that you should go on a flashy white wedding.”*

**Pride** added: *“Spending a lot may just be to **please** the community.”*

**Pretty** clarified: *“The preparation (and concomitant expenses) for the church wedding depends on a person’s status.”*

**Pretty** added: *“A lot of thousands are recklessly spent in one day. Some of the money that is used in church weddings, some people seem to want to show off. So that people may speak highly of my wedding. Some people who come to the wedding do not really come to witness the vows being exchanged but want to see the clothes that the wedding couple is wearing, the food and a lot of other things. They just want to see how organized things are. How the cars look like, etc. People want to compare with South Africa’s ‘Our Perfect Wedding’.”*



**Prisca** also mentioned: *“People now want to copy what is done by others, those that have the resources. So we try to copy these and yet we cannot afford it and end up in debt.”*

**Evans** responded: “Yes. [They will have witnessed a wedding where a lot of money was spent and want to match that one].”

**Anesu** stated: *“Yah [to make an impression], they are trying to do what others are doing and that’s exactly what we expect to see. So they run here and there trying ...”*

**Vimbai** declared: *“Ah, it’s not that clear [that church weddings are not about these expenses] because mostly when we are raised, we are made to believe that the wedding is that big party of which marriage is the initial part, the signing of documents, before we go into celebrations.”*

Mair (1969: 39) asserts, “The outlay involved is therefore very high; indeed this seems to have become the principal field for competition in conspicuous waste.” It is more to impress people and a result of bowing to social pressure and to other people’s expectations.

Fiedler (1998: 52) stresses, “It goes without saying that in the teaching of the faith mission churches there is no connection whatsoever between the church wedding and the (expensive) feast. But folk church practice seems to allow for no other option. For the church wedding (-feast) not only excellent food is required, but also the bridal dress and the bridegroom’s suit, and ... special clothes for the bridesmaids, bestmen, parents and relatives, and maybe transport for all the guests.” As already indicated, Fiedler adds that successfully holding an expensive church wedding is a major status symbol. All these need revisiting and reconsidering. A postcolonial hybrid solution will go a long way towards resolving these challenges.

## **Sub-theme 6.6 Nature of expenses incurred for church weddings**

There are numerous items that contribute to the expenses of a church wedding. According to Mair (1969: 39), "... the desiderata include a white dress, veil, and florist's bouquet for the bride, new clothes for the groom, bridesmaids, and groomsmen, a reception at which wedding-cakes are consumed as well as other food, a photograph of the couple, and transport by car to the church and from it to the reception; not only the couple but, if possible, the bridesmaids and groomsmen change their clothes after the ceremony and reappear in a second new outfit." Although she does not cover everything that contributes to the expenses her attempt is a very solid one. Nda Christians attempt to have the above-mentioned and other items in their church weddings.

The following are what participants mentioned in connection with the expenses that Nda Christians in Chimanimani incur for their church weddings.

### **6.6.1 Food/catering**

**Godfrey** said: "The food."

**Dakarai** clarified: "... *First, it is used to buy food because all the people that come to the wedding need to be fed so as to be happy at the wedding.*"

**Edwin** stated: "... *You know for a wedding there is need to provide food and to cater for other expenses as well. People cannot spend the day gathered and just looking at each other without any eating (mabiko). It's impossible.*"

**Patrick** explained: "*All the neighbouring villages are drawn to a wedding happening in one village. So this is all about feeding people who will not contribute even a cent at the end of the day. Actually these people will have found somewhere to get free food for the day. Actually this expense of feeding all such people is difficult.*"

**Pretty** said: "*He borrows (to pay) the cow to feed the people ... food and other things.*"

The importance of feasting together among the Ndaou has been repeatedly emphasised in this thesis.

### 6.6.2 Attire: clothes, rings

**Edwin** stated: *“Yes [rings] all that and the clothes are so expensive.”*

**Prisca** said: *“Yah [weddings are being done to be extreme], really. It’s now too extreme. For example, you can imagine that at a wedding people will change dresses three times. What’s the purpose of that? And if you are to assess, those people cannot afford such luxury but someone will opt to change three times...: Yes, flashy dressing.”*

**Godfrey** mentioned: *“... expensive clothes.”*

**Kumbirai** indicated: *“I am saying it has a lot of expenses, the wedding gowns, the clothes for the bridal team and other things. You also need to buy rings.”*

Most of these items may simply be a way of mimicking the white people just as has been mentioned before in this thesis. There seems to be a feeling of satisfaction associated with being able to conduct church weddings clad in the same type of attire and exchanging the same kind of rings that Europeans would in a Western marriage.

### 6.6.3 Retinue/wedding teams

**Herbert** said: *“I think I just mentioned that some of them are very expensive especially when you have a lot of men involved, say half a dozen men and half a dozen girls (bridal team), and you are fitting them all out then it becomes a bit expensive.”*

**Batsirai** mentioned: *“Really, come to think that others now have 12 or 24 members in their bridal teams.”*

**Herbert**, a retired and elderly SAGM missionary, and **Batsirai**, a retired pastor and a practising marriage officer, note that there are many expenses associated with wedding teams. Sadly, the two were of the opinion that the Ndaou overdo certain

aspects of the Western wedding, so much so that the Europeans themselves would be surprised to see the extravagant waste that characterises Ndaou church weddings. This issue has really gotten out of hand as far as the expenses are concerned.

#### **6.6.4 Venue and decor**

**Godfrey** responded: “... *expensive deco, expensive venues.*”

**Ronald** explained: “*Even the venue should be big to accommodate everyone. Chairs need to be covered with white cloths and deco needs to be set as well...you need to pay people who provide services at the wedding. The things that are used are expensive: the centrepiece, deco, and so forth.... The centrepiece is under deco. When the table is set it should be covered by a cloth and at the middle of the table there should be some flowers, and this is expensive. Just to have the cloth on top of the table is for a fee. To put another cloth on top of that cloth that is for a fee again. To put the flower on top of the cloth is another fee. To put the vase that is talked about that has watery liquid that has the wedding colours chosen by the couple is another fee as well. So deco for just one table can cost you US\$15 or \$20. This is just one table, just to decorate it. Then the other cloth that is called ‘backdrop’ can cost US\$800. There are a lot of things.*”

This also is another clear example of conspicuous waste as was mentioned earlier on in this chapter.

#### **6.6.5 Cars and transport, accommodation**

**Godfrey** mentioned: “... *expensive hired cars.*”

**Ronald** declared: “... *you have to cater for everyone from food to where they are going to sleep if they are coming from far.... and transport ...*”.

Church weddings are clearly propagating a materialistic culture among the Ndaue Christians of Chimanimani, Zimbabwe.

#### **6.6.6 Other**

**Kumbirai** added: *“... other things... the printing of wedding cards also need money, and others. There are a lot of expenses.”*

The necessity of all these should be examined, as this study has maintained, in order to come up with a postcolonial hybrid solution that does not discriminate against either the traditional marriage or the church weddings. This study will make proposals towards such a solution in the concluding chapter.

### **Sub-theme 6.7 Experiences and suggestions on countering of church wedding expenses**

#### **6.7.1: Experiences on countering of church wedding expenses**

**Sarah** stated: *“Some people assist when someone comes out clearly to say he or she cannot afford the church wedding. Some people volunteer to help in such cases. Some people no longer make open invitations to the wedding. They now stipulate who or how many people should come from the woman’s side and from the man’s side as well.”*

**Janet** responded: *“Some people help if someone comes out into the open to say he or she wants to wed but does not have money.”*

**Batsirai** remarked: *“We tried in my time (with reference to his part in pastoral ministry before retirement), I remember at Rusitu (Chimanimani) when we joined a man and his wife with ordinary clothes. We explained that what you are doing is wedding before God. These other material things, if you had them it was going to be ok, but they are not the most important. So, others really understood it. The wedding went on well.”*

**Batsirai** added: *“A wedding can be conducted at home and people need to understand this. A family that we know came in the evening and a pastor who was a marriage officer came to join them (marry them). They invited the in-laws to the wedding and the wedding went on well. We married another couple that worked in one of the church departments without any expenses incurred.”*

The over-arching element here is the view that Ndaou people should keep their weddings simple and that they should speak up and allow others to help them in preparing for church weddings instead of silently subjecting themselves to pressure and stress.

### **6.7.2 Suggestions on countering of church wedding expenses**

#### **6.7.2.1 Combine traditional and church wedding with existing church activities**

**Patrick** said: *“We come back to saying it would be good if the two marriages can be brought together to avoid these expenses. The only expense should be in paying roora. Yes, to make it less burdensome for people and to allow them to start their family financially better.”*

**Fungai** suggested: *“The church wedding can be done at a church gathering without having to pay for all those other things. You just need to buy a chicken and a cake and then at a church gathering you wed and sign the marriage certificate. You can have your wedding where the church is having a weekend church revival where food is already taken care of. Yes [you can utilise such opportunities].”*

The United Baptist Church, amongst other mission-founded churches, needs to rethink its position on church weddings and associated expenses. Phiri (2012: 255) points out that “African theologians have been calling for the Church to be rooted in African culture.” Combining the ‘blessing of a marriage’ with the traditional marriage ceremony sounds like a very good direction to go. Okonkwo (2003: 214-218) admits that the problem of duplicating marriage ceremonies was a reality among the Igbo of Nigeria

as well. He suggests a simultaneous carrying out of the traditional and Christian marriage celebration as a solution to this problem. This he calls “an inculturation of the Igbo traditional marriage rite and Christian sacrament to have an inculturated marriage rite for the Church in Igboland”.

According to Okonkwo (2003: 215) “This will not only save the people from the duplication of public celebration and accompanying expenses but, will also provide a culturally meaningful Christian marriage celebration that will fulfil both traditional and Christian demands.”

Madumere (1995: 50) likewise mentions that integration and harmonisation of the Christian marriage ceremonies within the traditional marriage would dissolve the dichotomy that exists between traditional marriages of Christians and church marriages. Madumere (1995: 50-51) and Hastings (1973: 72) offer three possibilities in which the harmonised function could take place. The first is that Christian formulas and a blessing be inserted within the customary ceremony at the bride’s home (or bridegroom’s home). The second is that the customary marriage be fused with a church service in church. The third is that the couple receives a blessing in church or at home (without any form of marriage ceremony) after the customary or traditional marriage has taken place. It is high time that the United Baptist Church and other denominations rethink these issues.

#### **6.7.2.2: Simplify, stay within your means**

**Evans** said: *“If you do not have a lot of money you can have a simple wedding.”*

**Pretty** suggested: *“The expenses should be avoided. ...but we should not do things that put us into debts.”*

**Herbert** responded: *“But if you can keep it ... to your best-man, your maid of honour or whatever, and just one or two flower girls then that’s better.”*

**Aurthur** said: *“Yes, if you do not have a lot of money you just use what you have. I do not see anything wrong. If you have it you are free to use it but if you do not have you just do what you can afford. (Both laugh).”*

**Godfrey** stressed that: *“There is no need to spend too much. Basic things should do.”*

**Juliet** said: *“Yes [it is one way of making the expenses less]. You won’t invite bands to play at the wedding but you will just play music discs.”*

This suggestion is also worth publicising. Nda Christians should be made to understand that it is completely acceptable to hold simplified, less expensive weddings. In emphasising this fact, Mair (1969: 40) mentions that “In the other type of religious marriage ... the couple are married quietly in their own or the minister’s home or in the church in the evening after work. No guests are invited, though a small tea-party may be held afterwards ...”. This may help as part of a solution arrived at from a postcolonial hybrid perspective. In this case, the financial burden on the Nda Christians would be significantly reduced.

#### **6.7.2.3: Churches should teach that church weddings are not primarily about the expensive celebration/festivities**

**Batsirai** said: *“We (pastors) should teach them well. Those that afford to spend too much can go ahead but if they cannot that is not a problem. The most important thing is marrying before God with or without festivities ... not the feast or the celebrations, it is not the clothes, it’s not a big bridal team, not the most expensive hotel.”*

It would appear that a much greater responsibility rests on the church’s shoulders. The pastors and or church leaders should make sure they stress that it is not necessary, nor is it required, to spend fortunes in preparing for a church wedding. Fiedler (1998: 58) says he looked forward to a day when the church would do everything in her power to help married couples to live Christian marriages, be it by teaching, seminars, counselling, preaching or any other means. Living Christian marriages may also here imply making believers understand the ‘essence’ of church marriage.



Magesa (2004: 16) contends that “the Church must take account of the changes that have taken place in society, and where necessary perhaps adjust its outlook and teaching accordingly.” In connection with the aforementioned, Hastings (1973: 71) avers that “... a sound pastoral policy for today must be a nuanced one, adapted to the present circumstances of different areas and peoples.”

As Ngundu (2010: 200-201) adds, “Church leaders in contemporary sub-Saharan Africa, in spite of the moral dilemmas which their church members repeatedly face at marriage, have not yet formulated their own theologies of marriage or written their own liturgies of Christian marriage suitable for the African context.” This is a major setback and the church needs to self-introspect in as far as church marriages are concerned. The church cannot and should not continue to ignore the dilemma that African Christians in general and Ndaou Christians in particular are facing.

Ngundu (2010: 204, 205) suggests that “If most of the moral difficulties encountered by African Christian couples at marriage arise from lack of the recognition of customary marriages by missionary-founded churches in African society, then, the modern church in sub-Saharan Africa needs to reconcile the two marriage systems.” He adds that the wedding is regarded by most African participants as a duplication of an earlier traditional marriage ceremony. He (2010: 205) asserts that “African Christians can enter into a Christian marriage which acknowledges and honours God through using culturally meaningful marriage artefacts.”

It is important to mention that what Ngundu suggests here has already been put to the test. Ngundu (2010: 205) calls the suggested combined ceremony “an African Christian customary marriage ceremony”. He submits that this combined ceremony has the advantages of having “recognition and registration of customary marriage, expressing covenantal faithfulness in marriage, and invoking God’s blessing on marriage.” He (2010: 205-213) details how such a marriage can be conducted on the day *roora* is paid. He (2010: 211,218) mentions that the Central Baptist Church in Harare, Zimbabwe, has adopted this approach to marriage since 2000. The denomination mentioned here is separate from the United Baptist Church and Ngundu advocated for the adoption of his suggested approach while he was an elder at this Central Baptist Church in Harare, Zimbabwe.

For Ngundu (2010: 216) “... no convincing case can be made from Christian scripture for making church marriage a criterion for church membership, ordinances and admission to Christian ministry.” He adds that “...Zimbabwean Christians would like to see in place a new approach to African Christian marriage which combines the customary, civil and church components in a single marriage ceremony.” This is a good example of finding a solution for the duplication of marriages from a postcolonial hybrid perspective.

#### **6.7.2.4 Create awareness that expensive weddings are optional not mandatory**

**Vimbai** considered: “... so I think maybe something can be done to make people know. [An awareness campaign of some sort to make people, young people especially aware]. Yes, to make people have options because most people are limited to the option of thinking that it is about the flashy wedding.”

As has been mentioned several times in this thesis, there is nothing inherently wrong with having a Ndaou traditional Christian marriage (Hastings, 1973: 66).

### **7.3 THEME 7: HOW PARTICIPANTS MARRIED AND THE REASONS THEREFOR**

This is the last theme that this chapter and this study will deal with. It focuses on participants’ experiences regarding marriage, both traditional and church ones.

#### **Sub-theme 7.1: Some participants married traditionally by *roora* and *mutimba* only, due to tradition/parents’ teaching**

**Eunice** said: “Some of us did not have church weddings.”

**Farai** also said: “I married traditionally. I did what is required although I have not yet finished paying *roora*. I am still in the process and wish to finish it.”

**Farai** explained: *“[the way (I) married] was influenced by my parents’ teaching as I was growing up. They would normally say they did not want me to take someone’s daughter and just stay with her without paying anything because that may cause problems later in life. So, it made me think that I wouldn’t want to have problems and that I ought to follow the good way that was taught to me by my parents and neighbors.”*

In spite of the fact that the church compels its members to have church weddings some of the participants had still not been able to conduct such weddings. This is evidence enough to show that the requirement weighs heavily on some church members.

## **7.2 Many participants married by roora and church wedding**

**Sekai** said: *“Yes. I got married traditionally. Roora was paid to (my) uncle and then the white wedding [followed].”*

**Anesu** mentioned that: *“Lobola [roora] was charged and he paid what he had. So ... traditional ceremony was done and then we moved on to the white wedding.”*

**Eric** said: *“... the roora, before the church wedding.”*

**Patrick** also said: *“I married the Christian way.... We started with the traditional marriage, to pay roora.”*

**Aurthur** reported that he: *“... paid the roora to the in-laws... After the marriage we then thought of wedding. Then we wedded.”*

**Godfrey** commented: *“I paid roora and then had a church wedding.”*

**Faith** mentioned: *“Roora was paid for me traditionally and then we wedded.”*

**Ronald** said: *"I look forward to marry in 2020. I expect to raise money to go marry customarily ... Ummm, the wedding, if the church wedding will still be standing in 2020 I will only do what I can afford."*

**Taurai** explained: *"So after I married traditionally, we stayed for some time. I initially thought we were going to wed in December but things did not go as planned. Money was hard to come by."*

Others went on to conduct church weddings because they were of the conviction that this was the right thing to do. **Taurai** mentions here that raising the money for the wedding was not easy but he had to do it because it was a church requirement. **Ronald**, a young man who is not yet married, hoped that church weddings, in their current form, should be a thing of the past when he gets to marrying in 2020.

### **Sub-theme 7.3 Roora part of marriage and church wedding is done because it is required by tradition**

**Pride** said: *"Yes, I paid roora. As a way of following our traditions because ... [it is a requirement]."*

**Faith** joined in, saying *"Why? Because that was what was acceptable in our society. To me that was what I knew to be the right thing to do. That is what was said to be good. That was the teaching I grew up hearing. If you do not do that you will have embarrassed your parents, the society, and the church. So, that's what I followed because that was what was acceptable."*

**Tapuwa** responded: *"because that is what I am supposed to do. I also want to do it. I want to appreciate my partner's family."*

**Shamiso** stated: *"In my case, it is just that I had this teaching that girls should follow a certain path."*

**Yeukai** indicated: *“I was married the Ndau way because that is the Ndau way of doing it. I was also married in church because I was a Christian and my parents who were also Christians expected me to have a church wedding.”*

The reasons given above unambiguously indicate that a reconsidering of marriages from a postcolonial hybrid perspective is long overdue among the Ndau of Chimanimani, Zimbabwe. The responses of the Ndau Christians to the European cultural conquest should be a critical element in such a reconsideration of marriages. The following will further bolster the same assertion.

#### **Sub-theme 7.4 Church wedding with *roora* and *mutimba* is done for various reasons**

##### **7.4.1 *Roora* is not enough: a Christian is expected to marry in church**

**Godfrey** declared: *“After this, we saw that this (roora) was not enough. As Christians we believe that people should have church weddings for them to be married in the right way. So, it was not possible for us to live as husband and wife ... (we had to marry in church) so that we could be properly husband and wife.”*

**Anesu** said: *“[I had the white wedding because] One, I understood it to be the most acceptable way, the Christian way.”*

**Yeukai**, as noted earlier, also said: *“I was married the Ndau way because that is the Ndau way of doing it. I was also married in church because I was a Christian and my parents who were also Christians expected me to have a church wedding.”*

**Prisca** explained: *“I had to go the church wedding way... (I) had been taught. It’s not acceptable [from a Christian perspective], to only marry traditionally...: I think it is not enough because we said Western marriage has blessings. there must be blessings. As Christians you would want to start everything with God. You want to begin with God and end with God.”*

**Kumbirai** shared: *“There were many pushing factors from the church. ... in AFM, one of the evangelists kept on encouraging me to wed ... He encouraged me to wed so that I would occupy church office as an elder or a deacon... I went to the magistrate’s court and wedded there with my witnesses. .... We got our marriage certificate. We took it to church but we were told that letter was not recognized in church.”*

As already established, the misconceptions exhibited above need to be corrected. The church should re-evaluate its position on the issue of Ndau traditional marriages and the place of church weddings in the church.

#### **7.4.2 A Christian: wanted God’s blessing and honour God, conviction**

**Patrick** said: *“I did it because I was a pastor. As a Christian I also needed God’s blessing.... that is what we believe in. I am a pastor and my wife had also been trained as a pastor. It was again the way that was considered to be the right way of marrying and I wanted to meet what was expected of me. It wasn’t to please myself but to please others.”*

**Fungai** explained: *“I married traditionally and finished paying roora. I then decided that I wanted to honour God, it is about honouring God. It is because of being a Christian... the church wedding ...”*

**Prisca** similarly remarked: *“I had to go the church wedding way... (I) had been taught. It’s not acceptable [from a Christian perspective], to only marry traditionally... I think it is not enough because we said Western marriage has blessings ... there must be blessings. As Christians you would want to start everything with God. You want to begin with God and end with God.”*

This point also assists in demonstrating that UBC and other missionary founded churches need to reconsider their teachings on marriage. Some of the participants’ responses show that they were compelled, in a sense, to have church weddings.

#### **7.4.3 Associated with employment: teacher at mission school, pastor**

**Eric** said: *“So we married but because I was a teacher in the missionary school system.”*

**Patrick**, as quoted earlier, explained: *“I did it because I was a pastor. As a Christian I also needed God’s blessing.... that is what we believe in. I am a pastor and my wife had also been trained as a pastor. It was again the way that was considered to be the right way of marrying and I wanted to meet what was expected of me.”*

**Prisca** responded: *“... [the Western way], it’s because I had married a pastor. So it was supposed to be done. I had also been trained as a pastor. I had to go the church wedding way... (I) had been taught. It’s not acceptable [from a Christian perspective], to only marry traditionally... I think it is not enough because we said Western marriage has blessings ... there must be blessings. As Christians you would want to start everything with God. You want to begin with God and end with God.”*

The issue of being compelled by circumstances to wed in church surfaces here as well. Such should not be the case. It has to be a voluntary decision that one makes without any pressure from the church or from the workplace.

#### **7.4.4 Partner’s wish**

**Eric** explained: *“So we married but because ... I had no choice and the girl would have just simply resisted.”*

**Kumbirai**, as quoted above, said: *“There were many pushing factors from the church and from my wife. ...: in AFM, one of the evangelists kept on encouraging me to wed ... He encouraged me to wed so that I would occupy church office as an elder or a deacon ... I went to the magistrate’s court and wedded there with my witnesses. .... We got our marriage certificate. We took it to church but we were told that letter was not recognized in church... My wife would sometimes say you seem like you do not really love me.... I then wedded but it wasn’t really out of choice.”*

Male participants indicated that they ended up having church weddings because their spouses demanded it. In this light, it is important to make sure that proper teaching is given to couples intending to marry and wed so that no one forces another into anything.

#### **7.4.5 It is official: marriage certificate, registered**

**Aurthur** said: *“We wedded because I needed the marriage certificate. To protect both of us... that will work even after I die to protect my wife. The marriage certificate would prove to everyone that we were legally married ... I could not then go get other wives and she also could not go to seek other men ... We are protected by that paper [marriage certificate].”*

The issue of the marriage certificate has been addressed previously. It will be important for all traditional marriages to have marriage certificates issued, as this thesis recommends in the next chapter, so that the need for marriage certificates does not drive people into conducting church weddings.

#### **7.4.6 Belief that it increases fidelity**

**Aurthur**, as just quoted above, stated that: *“We wedded because I needed the marriage certificate ... to protect both of us... that will work even after I die to protect my wife. The marriage certificate would prove to everyone that we were legally married ... I could not then go get other wives and she also could not go to seek other men ... We are protected by that paper [marriage certificate].”*

The perception that there is a supposed correlation between conducting a church wedding and chastity or fidelity has already been refuted in this thesis. It is premised on a flawed understanding. Fidelity is not linked to whether one conducts a church wedding or not.



#### **7.4.7 Doing what others do, copy others**

**Taurai** said: *“Why? ... because we used to go to other people’s weddings and you admire what they will have done. Actually if you look at these weddings they are beautiful but because I had married a lady pastor who would always say she did not want to be put to shame, and the parents as well, I could not go any other way. I could not go against the family. .... (we) were succumbing to certain pressures. I did not want to be an embarrassment.”*

This further bolsters the view that some people hold church weddings to meet social expectations and as a result of social pressure, coupled with wanting to impress people.

#### **7.4.8 Family’s /parents’ expectations**

**Godfrey** said: *“We did this because we had to respect my wife’s parents.”*

**Yeukai** explained: *“I was married the Ndau way because that is the Ndau way of doing it. I was also married in church because I was a Christian and my parents who were also Christians expected me to have a church wedding.”*

Here again, impressing other people stands out as the reason for having church weddings.

#### **7.4.9 To not be ashamed**

**Taurai**, as noted earlier, answered: *“Why? ... because we used to go to other people’s weddings and you admire what they will have done. Actually if you look at these weddings they are beautiful but because I had married a lady pastor who would always say she did not want to be put to shame, and the parents as well, I could not go any other way. I could not go against the family. .... (we) were succumbing to certain pressures. I did not want to be an embarrassment.”*

This reason has more to do with the conviction that the church wedding was the right way to go although it also harbours overtones of wishing to impress other people. Failure to hold one would mean being a disappointment. This also, like the other points above, will be addressed if a postcolonial hybrid solution is sought for reconciling traditional marriages and church weddings.

#### **Sub-theme 7.5 Some participants married traditionally (*roora* and *mutimba*) and by means of a church wedding because marriage took place before becoming a Christian**

**Edwin** responded: “... so I had married before I became a Christian. So when we became Christians it became apparent that we were supposed to have a church wedding. That is the path I took.”

This last point shows that demanding that members should wed in church puts pressure on new converts who likewise have to meet this expectation. Some, like **Edwin** himself, had to wed after many years of living with his wife, having been traditionally married. Upon conversion they were then required to wed in church simply to satisfy the church’s demands.

### **7.4 CONCLUSION OF THE CHAPTER**

Chapter 5 dealt with the following theme:

- Theme 1: Marriage practices amongst the Ndau people

Chapter 6 discussed the following four themes:

- Theme 2: Most preferred way of marriage amongst the Ndau people
- Theme 3: Various reasons for having a white/church wedding after traditional marriage
- Theme 4: Perceived relationship between traditional marriage rites and Christian marriage

- Theme 5: Different views on the sufficiency of traditional marriages

The current chapter discussed the following two themes:

- Theme 6: Thoughts on the expenses of church weddings
- Theme 7: How participants married and reasons therefor

Seven sub-themes were discussed under theme 6. These were:

- Church weddings are (too) expensive
- Church weddings favour the rich and are a burden for and discriminate against the poor
- Expenses of a church wedding have various negative consequences
- Expenses of a church wedding also have positive effects  
(It ought to be emphasised that both the positive and the negative effects were given as perceived by the participants)
- Various explanations/reasons/causes are given for having expensive weddings
- Nature of expenses incurred for church weddings and
- Experiences and suggestions on countering of church wedding expenses.

Emergent from this theme was a general perception that church weddings have become too expensive. They have thus become a burden for the majority of members who cannot afford to have them. In addition to increasing a social stratification in the church they have many other negative consequences. One of the positive effects mentioned was that expensive church weddings are perceived as making for greater valuing of marriage and partner.

The issues of choice, African and Western cultural practises as well as social pressures, were adduced as reasons why Ndau Christians in Chimanimani have expensive church weddings.

Experiences and suggestions were given on how to counter church wedding expenses. It was established that there have been very successful, less expensive weddings in UBC. On ways of reducing such expenses, the following four were given:

- Combine traditional and church wedding with existing church activities
- Simplify, stay within your means

- Churches should teach that church weddings are not primarily about the expensive celebration/festivities and
- Create awareness that expensive weddings are optional not mandatory.

The last theme, Theme 7, focused on how participants married and reasons thereof. Some participants only married traditionally due to tradition/parents' teaching and they had not yet wedded in church. Many had married traditionally and conducted church weddings. There were several reasons given by participants for holding church weddings. The following were the reasons given:

- *Roora* is not enough: a Christian is expected to marry in church
- A Christian: wanted God's blessing and honour God, conviction
- Associated with employment: teacher at mission school, pastor
- Partner's wish
- It is official: marriage certificate, registered
- Belief that it increases fidelity
- Doing what others do; copy others
- Family/parents expectation and
- To not be ashamed.

It was established that some of the participants married traditionally before converting to Christianity and had to have church weddings after becoming Christians.

Throughout all these chapters, the study has maintained that there needs to be a postcolonial hybrid solution to the problem of duplication of marriages among the Ndau people of Chimanimani, Zimbabwe. The next chapter will develop this further. It will offer a summary of the study and/or summaries of the several chapters in the study, recommendations and a conclusion to the whole study.

## **CHAPTER 8**

### **SUMMARIES, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **8.1 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter summarises the preceding chapters as well as providing recommendations. The latter are in three categories: recommendations for the United Baptist Church and other mission-founded churches, recommendations for legislative changes and recommendations for practice changes. After these, a conclusion to the whole thesis will be provided. All these will be presented from a postcolonial hybrid perspective.

#### **8.2 SUMMARY OF CHAPTER 1**

Chapter 1 gave an introduction and general orientation to the study. It stated the aim of the study: to develop an in-depth understanding of the Ndaу people's perceptions and experiences on the connection between and the necessity for both the traditional and the Christian marriages in Chimanimani, Zimbabwe. It also specified the objectives of the study. The thesis sought to obtain data regarding the Ndaу people's understanding of marriage practices, by conducting in-depth semi-structured interviews and focus group interviews among the Ndaу people of Chimanimani.

The first chapter emphasised that the study was to use both the phenomenological approach and postcolonialism. Phenomenology was employed during fieldwork and postcolonialism in analysing the data. It was employed to describe the understandings of marriage by the Ndaу while postcolonialism was the paradigm from which this thesis proceeded. In line with Corbin and Strauss (2008: 1), postcolonialism was the philosophical orientation that undergirded this research. It was emphasised that postcolonialism does not refer to after colonialism ended but rather after colonialism began. Consequently, throughout the study all that was discussed was in line with this paradigm. All the chapters made a conscious attempt to assess and to present what took place after colonialism was initiated and after the missionaries and Westernisation came into contact with the Ndaу of Chimanimani, Zimbabwe.

Apart from detailing the aim and objectives of the study, phenomenology and postcolonialism, Chapter 1 discussed the area of investigation, research problem and research question, justification, issues of research methodology and data collection methods as well. Sampling, data analysis, data verification, ethical considerations, clarification of key terms and/or concepts, and structure of the thesis were likewise presented. It was stressed that the research is qualitative in nature. Individual and focus group interviews were identified as the data collection methods that the research was going to utilise. Both purposive and theoretical sampling were mentioned as the sampling methods that the study was to use. Chapter 1 highlighted the need for trustworthiness in research and the place of literature control in research findings chapters. Ethical considerations also were to be adhered to, including anonymity, confidentiality, and informed consent. Religion, ethnicity and identity, marriage as a rite of passage, and social stratification were considered as well.

### **8.3 SUMMARY OF CHAPTER 2**

This chapter discussed the contributions of scholars regarding the marriage issue in question and other related issues. Several subtopics were used to facilitate the discussion and each was discussed in detail. The chapter presented six major areas with several subtopics for each: African Indigenous Religions and Worldviews, Ndaue Ethnic Identities, Marriage, Missionaries in Zimbabwe, Laws, and Problematic Areas. Polygamy/polygyny, Church weddings, Bridewealth, Social Stratification, and Abolishment of church weddings were treated under the last one of these. It was established that the Ndaue religion needs to be understood for what it is. Although, some of the history of the Ndaue and that of SAGM was discussed in Chapter 2, more detailed examination was provided in Chapters 3 and 4 respectively. The chapter stated that, in this study, marriage was to be treated as an important rite of passage among the Ndaue.

### **8.4 SUMMARY OF CHAPTER 3**

Chapter 3 sought to provide an orientation and/or background to facilitate an understanding of the research findings in the chapters that follow. The chapter

employed postcolonialism in line with the thesis' paradigm of study. It focused on the Ndaou people of Chimanimani, Zimbabwe. Chapter 3 consists of three major sections. The first section presents the Geography and History of the Ndaou people. The second focuses on Ndaou Identities/Ndauness while the third is on Marriages. All the sections employed the use of different subheadings. The etymology of the name 'Zimbabwe', a brief history of the people of Zimbabwe in general, origins and meaning of the term 'Gazaland', and brief histories of Chimanimani and Chipinge were part of what the first section presented. Ndaou Identities were likewise considered. The following: Identity, Shona and Ndaou, Ndauness, Reciprocity, Mbire and Rozvi, *Mfecane*, Shangaans, Ndaou Common Suffering, Totems and Clans, and Chieftaincies were all discussed under Ndaou Identities. This section detailed how the Shona and Ndaou came to be termed the Shona/Ndaou. The same section presented aspects that have been associated with being Ndaou: ear piercing, *nyora* (scarification), and *pika* (dots on several parts of women's bodies). The third and final major section on Marriages focused on Shona Marriages in General, Ndaou Marriages in Particular, *Roora*, and Polygamy/Polygyny.

## **8.5 SUMMARY OF CHAPTER 4**

Chapter 4 dealt with the SAGM missionaries who evangelised the Ndaou people. Just like Chapter 3, it sought to give an orientation and/or some background to facilitate an understanding of the research findings chapters that ensue (Chapters 5 to 7). As emphasised in all the preceding chapters, Chapter 4 employed postcolonialism as the paradigm that undergirds the study. The chapter focused particularly on the SAGM who evangelised Chimanimani District (then part of British Gazaland) and the church that was born out of this Mission, UBC. It was divided into six major parts. The first presented Missionaries in Africa in General. The second was on Missionaries' Work in Zimbabwe. The third focused on SAGM, with particular emphasis on its founders, the Geographical Expansion of the Mission, the Trek into Zimbabwe, the Holy Spirit's Visit at Rusitu (1915), Later Years in the Mission/the Church, UBC, and SIM. Andrew Murray, Martha Osborne, and William Spencer Walton were described as important founders of what was to become the SAGM, later Africa Evangelical Fellowship (AEF) and Serving in Mission (SIM). A brief history of the latter years of the Mission or the

Church in Zimbabwe was given here specifically to show that UBC's position on marriages has not changed even after black clergy took over from the missionaries. The fourth major section was on SAGM Missionaries' Attitude Towards the Ndau and their Culture. The fifth was devoted to Ndau People's Attitude Towards the Missionaries. The last section discussed Missionaries and Imperialism. South Africa was shown as an important base as far as the evangelisation of Zimbabwe is concerned. All this was meant to situate the study and to prepare for the chapters addressing the research findings.

Quotes from primary sources that illustrate how SAGM missionaries' perceptions about the Ndau and the Ndau marriage practices helped the missionaries to undermine Ndau cultural practices, while at the same time elevating their own Victorian marriage practices, were integrated with this chapter.

Informed by Chapter 4 and the preceding chapters, the study further presented research findings in subsequent chapters.

## **8.6 SUMMARY OF CHAPTERS 5-7**

Chapters 5 to 7 contained research findings from the research among the Ndau in Chimanimani, Zimbabwe. Seven themes were discussed together with sub-themes, categories and sub-categories. These chapters presented the findings from the data collected through individual interviews and focus group interviews in Chimanimani, Zimbabwe. All these were evaluated using postcolonialism as the paradigm that undergirded the study. Literature control was integrated into the presentation of the findings in this chapter for data verification purposes.

Following the paradigms that underpin this study, Chapter 5 gave the first part of my research findings and literature control. It furnished biographic profiles of the 20 individual participants and those of the participants in the 5 focus groups. The 7 themes emerging from the data were introduced together with their sub-themes, categories and sub-categories. Theme 1: Marriage practices amongst the Ndau, was discussed in detail in this chapter. The following sub-themes were likewise considered:

- Sub-theme 1.1: Known marriage practices of the Ndau people
- Sub-theme 1.2: Present state of different ways of marrying among the Ndau



- Sub-theme 1.3: Reasons for customs (ways of getting married) having died out

In Theme 1, the participants mentioned several different ways of conducting marriages among the Ndaus. These included *matorwa*, *kutizira/kutizisa*, *musengabere*, *kuzvarira*, *kuputswa*, *kuganha*, amongst others. All these demonstrate that the Ndaus had a well-structured and complex system of marriage, which was meant to ensure that all the Ndaus men and women, and young women and young men were enabled to marry.

Under sub-theme 1.1 *roora* was presented as the most common and well known marriage practice amongst the Ndaus people. It was noted that *roora* featured in all the participants' responses as a common feature in the different forms of Ndaus marriages. *Roora*, therefore, was an indispensable element in *kubvunzira/kukumbira* which is followed by *mutimba*, *kutizira* or *kutizisa mukumbo* or *kufohla*, and *musengabere* among others. Under the same sub-theme, *mutimba*, *kutizisa mukumbo*, *kuganha*, *kutizira*, *kugarwa nhaka*, *kuzvarira*, *kugara mapfiwa*, *kuriga mutanda*, *kutema ugariri*, *chinebvudzi*, and *kuputswa* – the different Ndaus marriage forms – were presented and discussed in detail. *Roora* together with a church wedding was found to be widely practiced among the Ndaus of Chimanimani, Zimbabwe. White Christian church weddings have therefore become an integral aspect of Ndaus marriages and so are civil marriages before a district officer. In essence, therefore, after the coming of the Westerners, *roora* preceded church and civil marriages as well since it was not possible to be married in the latter without having paid *roora*.

The second sub-theme focused on the present state of different ways of marrying among the Ndaus of Chimanimani. It was established that some such practices had died out while others are still practiced. Practices like *kuputswa*, *kutema ugariri*, *kugara mapfiwa*, *musengabere* among others were noted to have ceased. Others like *matorwa* and *kutizira* are still being practiced with *kuriga mutanda*, *kugarwa nhaka* and others possibly still existing in subtle forms.

The third and final sub-theme that Chapter 5 presented dealt with the reasons for certain marriage customs having died away among the Ndaus of Chimanimani, Zimbabwe. Eight such reasons were considered:

- Western influence

- Christianity
- Zimbabwean Constitution and laws
- Education
- Livelihood changes: Employment and available currency
- Women's rights
- Globalisation and
- People themselves having changed.

Following the paradigms that buttress the study, the following four themes were discussed in Chapter 6:

- Theme 2: Most preferred way of marriage amongst the Ndau people
- Theme 3: Various reasons for having a white/church wedding after traditional marriage
- Theme 4: Perceived relationship between traditional marriage rites and Christian marriage
- Theme 5: Different views on the sufficiency of traditional marriages

Theme 2 had four sub-themes which were discussed. These were:

- Paying *roora* and *mutimba* were referred to as the preferred way of marriage amongst the Ndau
- Other than preferred, *roora* and *mutimba* are referred to as 'most acceptable, expected, well prepared, and right (proper) way'
- *Mutimba* is the celebration and
- Elements and sequence of *mutimba*.

In Theme 2, paying *roora* and *mutimba* were alluded to as the preferred way of marriage amongst the Ndau. The former is referred to as the most preferred traditional way of marriage. The *mutimba* is alluded to as the preferred traditional way of marriage which includes the paying of the *roora* and the wife being accompanied to the husband's home. The participants mentioned that *mutimba* was a celebration of a marriage that had already been constituted through marriage negotiations and *roora*. They equated *mutimba* with church wedding ceremonies. Elements and sequence of *mutimba* were discussed too.

The above links very well with what Chapter 5 discussed, concerning *roora* being a common element in all Ndaou forms of marriage and *mutimba* as the preferred way of celebrating the marriage that follows payment of *roora*. It was emphasised that *mutimba* was characterised by much feasting, an element that has been transferred to church wedding ceremonies thereby pushing them to be extremely expensive for many Ndaou Christians. In discussing the different elements and sequence of *mutimba* the importance of kinship ties was underlined.

Theme 3 commented on the different reasons that participants gave for having a white/church wedding after traditional marriage. The following twelve reasons were adduced:

- for celebration
- for God's blessing
- because it is regarded as God's requirement according to the Bible
- because they have converted to Christianity
- because it is a church requirement/rule
- because church teaching encourages church weddings
- for different levels of recognition and acceptance in the church
- for general social recognition
- because of the association of Christianity with Europeanisation/Westernisation
- because it is regarded as a deterrent to unfaithfulness and polygamy
- because church weddings have wider official recognition than traditional marriages
- for (convenience and) material advantages.

It was established that most of the reasons for conducting church weddings after traditional marriages were based on a lack of understanding of the history of marriages in Europe, from where the SAGM missionaries originally came. There were many reasons that were also based on flawed understandings of bible teachings. It was reiterated that church weddings had neither a biblical nor a theological basis. As such, black clergy in missionary-founded churches need to rethink their theology on church weddings and the place of traditional marriages among the Ndaou Christians of Chimanimani, Zimbabwe.

Participants held a perception that God's blessing(s) could only be bestowed on a couple if they go through a church wedding and not just end with a traditional marriage. I find this problematic. Fiedler (1998: 52) also does not agree with this claim. God's blessing is not limited to 'church walls'. The church's teaching on church weddings is warped and should be reconsidered. The very fact that churches encourage church weddings is itself very problematic. Fiedler (1998: 57-58) calls for the abolishment of church weddings, citing the fact that they are not needed to make a marriage Christian. He says Christian marriages can still be blessed by God even without a church wedding perhaps by simply having a 'church prayer'.

The insistence on church weddings by the church has exacerbated social stratification among Ndaou Christians and elsewhere in Zimbabwe and Africa (Fiedler, 1998: 53).

The data showed that Ndaou Christians, as shown above, hold weddings for recognition and acceptance in the church. It is almost like a status symbol. Those who wed in church are to be looked up to while those who do not are to be looked down at.

- People have a church wedding after a traditional marriage for recognition of the marriage
- People have a church wedding after a traditional marriage for recognition of the marriage and acceptance and access to serving in the church
- People have a church wedding after a traditional marriage for social acceptance in the church

It was clear from participants' responses that Christianity and Westernisation are conflated among the Ndaou Christians in Chimanimani.

The participants also mentioned that church weddings are regarded as a deterrent to unfaithfulness and polygyny. In my opinion, faithfulness and remaining married to one woman cannot be externally enforced by an outward act like wedding in church. I am convinced that this is a matter of the heart. Men that have been married in church may well proceed, in everyday life, to take several other wives and to be unfaithful to their wives.

Theme 4 arose as a result of participants' responses to the question that required them to express perceptions on the relationship between traditional marriage rites and Christian marriage. It was established that the participants uttered varied perceptions about the said relationship. The following five sub-themes were discussed:

- Different perceptions on equality of traditional marriage rites and Christian church weddings
- Different perceptions on the interrelatedness of traditional marriage rites and Christian church weddings
- Perceived commonalities between traditional marriage rites and Christian church weddings
- Perceptions about churches' views on the relationship between traditional marriage rites and Christian marriage
- Perceived distinctions between traditional marriage rites and Christian marriage.

The many different categories under these sub-themes demonstrated the diversity of the participants' perceptions about the relationship between traditional marriages and Christian marriages.

The last theme that Chapter 6 considered had to do with the sufficiency of traditional marriages. Here again the participants expressed different views. Some maintained that traditional marriages were sufficient. Others were convinced that traditional marriage is not sufficient (on its own) because it is not legally registered and it is not accompanied by a marriage certificate. Yet others were of the view that while traditional marriages may be sufficient for non-Christians they were not adequate for a Christian. The following were reasons given to support the latter view:

- Traditional marriage lacks God's blessing
- Traditional marriage is not before God
- Traditional marriage is without a marriage certificate
- It is not sufficient for recognition for full participation in the church
- It lacks the social support advantages of a church wedding.

Like the perceptions expressed in Theme 3, some of the views in Theme 4 were based on misconceptions and this was addressed in the chapter.

It was established that the insufficiency that the participants repeatedly referred to was not premised on anything inherent in traditional marriage but rather on the external matter of non-registration. In effect, therefore, if traditional marriages were to be registered, the insufficiency cited above would disappear. The recommendations below offer registration of all traditional marriages as a solution to the problem stated here.

In this chapter it was emphasised that Ndau marriages in today's age need to be understood from a postcolonial hybrid perspective. They cannot continue to be subjected to 'European' church weddings. There needs to be a way of allowing the two to co-exist without necessarily holding one marriage form in higher esteem, to the detriment of the other. The combined traditional-Christian marriage ceremony that this thesis recommends may be a useful way of reconciling the two.

It is important to recapitulate what the first two chapters on research findings discussed before moving to a summary of Chapter 7 - the last of the three research findings chapters. Chapter 5 dealt with the following theme:

- Theme 1: Marriage practices amongst the Ndau people

Chapter 6 discussed the following four themes:

- Theme 2: Most preferred way of marriage amongst the Ndau people
- Theme 3: Various reasons for having a white/church wedding after traditional marriage
- Theme 4: Perceived relationship between traditional marriage rites and Christian marriage
- Theme 5: Different views on the sufficiency of traditional marriages.

Chapter 7, the last of the three research findings chapters, considered the following two themes:

- Theme 6: Thoughts on the expenses of church weddings
- Theme 7: How participants married and reasons therefor.

Seven sub-themes were discussed under Theme 6. These were:

- Church weddings are (too) expensive
- Church weddings favour the rich and are a burden for and discriminate against the poor
- Expenses of a church wedding have various negative consequences
- Expenses of a church wedding also have positive effects  
(It ought to be emphasised that both the positive and the negative effects were given as they were perceived by the participants)
- Various explanations/reasons/causes are given for having expensive weddings
- Nature of expenses incurred for church weddings and
- Experiences and suggestions on countering of church wedding expenses.

In this theme there was a general perception which emerged: that church weddings have become too expensive. They have, as a result, become a burden for the majority of members who cannot afford to hold them. Apart from increasing social stratification they result in numerous negative consequences. Some issues identified among these were: delaying some people from getting married; the reason for many people cohabitating, elopements, marrying for money, debts, distortion of the meaning of a wedding, and premarital pregnancies. One of the positive effects was that expensive church weddings are perceived to make for valuing one's marriage and partner more.

All the aforementioned negative effects of expensive church weddings are regrettable. People focus on the less important elements of the wedding, the material aspects, and in the process miss the important aspects, even the essence, of it. In line with this, Fiedler (1998: 52), as noted in the study, emphasises that "Church weddings have become even more a problem for Christian marriage...". The participants, as established, also mentioned positive effects of expensive church weddings. Expenses incurred create a sense of achievement. However, value is not necessarily always tied together with expense. One can still have a valuable marriage without having to spend excessively for a church wedding.

Choice, African and Western cultural reasons as well as social pressures were adduced as reasons why Ndau Christians in Chimanimani have expensive church

weddings. The expenses were said to be incurred for food/catering, attire such as clothes/rings, retinue/wedding teams, venue and decor, cars and transport as well as accommodation, among others.

Participants suggested several ways of countering church wedding expenses. First, experiences on doing so were given; then suggestions to counter such expenses followed. Combining traditional and church weddings with existing church activities was found to be one good counter measure. Simplifying and staying within a person's means was found to be another one. The third measure had to do with churches teaching that church weddings were not primarily about the expensive celebration/festivities. The last suggestion had to do with creating awareness that expensive weddings are optional, not mandatory.

It was mentioned that the United Baptist Church, among other mission-founded churches, needs to rethink its position on church weddings and associated expenses. Phiri (2012: 255) mentions that "African theologians have been calling for the Church to be rooted in African culture." Combining the 'blessing of a marriage' with the traditional marriage ceremony appears to be a very good direction to go. Okonkwo (2003: 214-218) admits that the problem of duplicating marriage ceremonies was a reality among the Igbo of Nigeria as well. He suggests a simultaneous carrying out of the traditional and Christian marriage celebration as a solution to this problem. This he calls "an inculturation of the Igbo traditional marriage rite and Christian sacrament to have an inculturated marriage rite for the Church in Igboland".

Madumere (1995: 50-51) and Hastings (1973: 72) advocate three possibilities in which the harmonised function can take place. The first is that Christian formulas and a blessing be inserted within the customary ceremony at the bride's home (or bridegroom's home), while the second is that the customary marriage be fused with a Church service in Church. The third is that the couple is given a blessing in church or at home (without any form of marriage ceremony) after the customary or traditional marriage has taken place. It is high time that the United Baptist Church and other denominations rethink these issues. Such a rethinking will provide solutions to the duplication of marriages from a postcolonial hybrid perspective.



The last theme, Theme 7, focused on how participants married and reasons therefor. Some participants married traditionally, merely because of tradition/parents' teaching, and they had not yet wedded in church. Many had married traditionally yet also conducted church weddings. There were several reasons given by participants for conducting the latter:

- *Roora* is not enough: a Christian is expected to marry in church
- A Christian: wanted God's blessing and honour God, conviction
- Associated with employment: teacher at mission school, pastor
- Partner's wish
- It is official: marriage certificate, registered
- Belief that it increases fidelity
- Doing what others do; copy others
- Family/parents expectation and
- To not be ashamed.

It was established that some of the participants had married traditionally before converting to Christianity and were required to have church weddings after becoming Christians.

In all these chapters, the thesis maintained that there needs to be a postcolonial hybrid solution to the problem of duplication of marriages among the Ndau people of Chimanimani, Zimbabwe. A combination of the traditional and the Christian ceremonies suggested in the recommendations below may be a helpful solution to this thorny issue.

## **8.7 RECOMMENDATIONS BASED ON RESEARCH FINDINGS**

### **8.7.1 Recommendations for United Baptist Church and other mission founded churches**

#### **8.7.1.1 The United Baptist Church should combine the traditional marriage with the church wedding into one ceremony**

The church should come to a realisation that the duplication of marriages is not doing the church any good. In fact, it is an unnecessary burden to the Ndaus. Several scholars (Okonkwo, 2003: 214-218; Madumere, 1995: 50-51; Hastings, 1973: 72; Ngundu, 2010: 205-213) call for an integration and harmonisation of Christian marriage ceremonies with traditional marriage.

Of the several suggested ways of harmonising them, in my view inserting the Christian formulas and a blessing within the customary ceremony at the bride's home would be the most appropriate. In cases where this may not be feasible, the couple may receive a blessing in church or at home (without any form of marriage ceremony) after the traditional marriage.

In a discussion concerning medicine (Western and traditional), Gelfand (1964: 114-117) explains that the Shona do not have any problems whatsoever in oscillating between Western and Traditional medicine. They do not find these contradictory in any way. If one does not find cure through traditional medicine, he or she goes to the hospital, and vice versa." I am convinced that the Ndaus do not have any problems combining customary marriage practices and Western marriage practices. The challenge is in compelling them to privilege one over the other.

**8.7.1.2    Apart from combining the traditional marriage function with the church marriage into one, the United Baptist Church should teach that an expensive church wedding ceremony is an optional extra.**

**8.7.1.3    The United Baptist Church should teach that God's blessing is not only obtained through a church wedding or within 'church walls'**

*Mutimba* (the traditional marriage celebratory ceremony) can equally be blessed by God. Fiedler (1998: 52) notes that the problem lay in the fact that the church did not take the wedding ceremony as the blessing of an existing marriage but as the 'real thing'. In a postcolonial context, the Ndaus ought to understand that their own '*mutimba*' was and is also the 'real thing'.

**8.7.1.4 The United Baptist Church should stop uncritically accepting European Christian marriage tradition. It should at the same time recognise customary marriages for church purposes.**

Ngundu (2010: 36), among others, does not see why customary marriages should not be accepted in church. He does not find any theological or biblical basis for the failure to accept them in church for communion and other church purposes including holding various offices.

Mugambi (1989: 9) mentions that people who choose to become and remain members in denominations introduced by foreign missionaries from Europe and North America need to appropriate Christianity in their own way within those denominations.

This study therefore, informed by postcolonialism, advocates for a critical assessment of marriage issues among the Ndaou Christians in Chimanimani in a way that would see customary marriages recognised for church purposes.

**8.7.1.5 Christian theologians and the church should do more to educate Ndaou Christians about the fact that weddings are not God's requirement and that they are not sanctioned by the Bible**

In line with this recommendation, Fiedler (1998: 57) asserts that although the New Testament teaches a great deal about Christian marriage it makes not the slightest allusion to a church wedding. The Bible, therefore, does not instruct Christians to conduct church weddings, and the church should make this clear today. Church weddings are not needed to make Christian marriages. The Bible neither advocates nor encourages Christians to hold church weddings. As such, the church should stop claiming that it does.

The aforesaid agrees with Isichei's (2004: 4) argument that, "Virtually all converts to Christianity in Africa have come from 'traditional' religions. These religions have much in common with the culture of the Bible, including an emphasis on spiritual paths to physical and mental healing, and on dreams and visions. The detailed prohibitions of Leviticus have parallels in the ritual restrictions typical of African cultures. In the twentieth century, the Zionist or prophetic church intuitively rediscovered these biblical

elements, which had been largely lost in European and American Christianity.” In a sense, the United Baptist Church needs to take a leaf from the said Zionist or prophetic churches.

**8.7.1.6 The United Baptist Church should stop making church marriage a requirement for members’ acceptance in the church**

Every sincere believer should receive communion and take up positions in church irrespective of whether they were married in church or not. This would be a truly postcolonial hybrid solution to marriage related problems among the Ndau of Chimanimani.

**8.7.1.7 The church should be actively involved in seeking solutions to ‘social stratification’ that is caused by ‘church weddings’ in the church**

The church should not continue to ignore the fact that church weddings have become very expensive. The fact that some can afford them and others cannot enhances ‘social stratification’ (Fiedler, 1998: 53, 57; Verryn, 1975: 396). It should seek to redress this.

Magesa (1976: 18) mentions that “As in the government the Church needs a leadership which is conscious of the needs and development of the people it serves and how to meet them. If its primary purpose is to preserve structures no matter how irrelevant these may be to the physical and spiritual needs of the people, then the new leadership will be enslaving its own people ...”. The church cannot and should not continue to perpetuate practices that enslave its people. Daneel (1973: 160) cites an inherent need to interpret Christianity according to African insights as one of the reasons contributing to growth of Shona Independent Churches.

**8.7.1.8 The United Baptist Church should stop calling people who only marry traditionally sinners**

Madumere (1995: 29) notes that people who only marry traditionally are called sinners in church. The church, rather, should emphasise the fact that there is nothing sinful about marrying in the Nda traditional way and that there is nothing 'Christian' about having church weddings. As Olowola (1993: 63) mentions, "... there are good things in African traditional religion, which any Christian theology relevant to Africa must take into serious account." Mugambi (1989: 9) notes that, "Beneath the veneer of imported ecclesiastical institutions African Christians remain African." Informed by the postcolonial perspective, the church needs to arrive at a realisation that 'Western' marriage practices are neither superior nor 'more Christian' compared to traditional marriages.

**8.7.1.9 Should anyone still feel like having church weddings, the church ought to teach and encourage such a person to have a simple inexpensive wedding**

Mair (1969: 40) mentions a type of religious marriage where the couple are married quietly in their own home or the minister's home or in the church in the evening after work. In such cases, only a small tea-party may be necessary. This follows the understanding that church weddings are not all about expensive celebration/festivities.

**8.7.1.10 The United Baptist Church should offer teachings, seminars, counselling, and sermons, among others, to help married couples live Christian lives**

Fiedler (1998: 58) makes such a proposition as well. This, as established in chapter 7, involves making believers understand the 'essence' of church marriage.

**8.7.1.11 The United Baptist Church in Chimanimani should emphasise the complementary nature of traditional marriage and church weddings**

Many scholars (Fiedler, 1998: 49; Verry, 1975: 306; Daneel, 1971: 248; Madumere, 1995: 30) mention that one cannot have a church wedding without paying *roora*. The church ought, therefore, to emphasise the complementary nature of the two and not the hierarchical nature that is most often evoked. In a postcolonial

hybrid setting it is crucial to value the intersection of the two. Hatendi (1973: 148) notes that, “There is no doubt that ninety-nine percent of Shona marriages satisfy customary and traditional requirements first – of which the solemnization of them in churches is an extension or duplication.”

### **8.7.2 Recommendations for legislative changes**

Legislators in Zimbabwe should consider giving marriage certificates to all married people in Zimbabwe whether they are only married traditionally or had church or court marriages as well. Each marriage needs to be documented so that all married people enjoy the privileges that come with having a marriage certificate.

One problem that Ngundu (2010: 167) found with customary marriage was its failure to issue a marriage certificate. Mugambi (2004: 238) also mentions that like church marriage, traditional marriage too needs registration.

### **8.7.3 Recommendation for practice changes**

There is a need for a general shift in mindset among Ndaue Christians in Chimanimani. They need to stop thinking that the Western marriage is ‘the marriage’ while they look down upon their own traditional marriage practices. The Ndaue people need to appreciate that they had a rich and complex marriage system. They should also be encouraged to cherish their marriage practices, of course excluding those elements that infringe on the rights of women and young girls. They need to be encouraged to appreciate and value their own cultural practices.

The above recommendation implies that Ndaue Christians in Chimanimani need to be conscious of themselves and to appreciate what constitutes their being. A reading of Biko’s definition of ‘Black Consciousness’ may be helpful here. Biko (1984: 360) (*Readings: The Definition of Black Consciousness*) contends that “... Black Consciousness is in essence the realisation by the black man [sic] of the need to rally together with his brothers [sic] around the cause of their operation – the blackness of their skin – and to operate as a group in order to rid themselves of the shackles that

bind them to perpetual servitude. It seeks to demonstrate the lie that black is an aberration from the 'normal' which is white. It is a manifestation of a new realisation that by seeking to run away from themselves and to emulate the white man, blacks are insulting the intelligence of whoever created them black. Black consciousness, therefore, takes cognisance of the deliberateness of God's plan in creating black people black. It seeks to infuse the black community with a new-found pride in themselves, their efforts, their value systems, their culture, their religion and their outlook on life." Fanon (1986 [1952]: 231) likewise stresses the need to "recapture the self".

Biko (1984: 360) adds that "the interrelationship between the consciousness of the self and the emancipatory programme is of paramount importance." He also notes that liberation is of paramount importance for black people cannot be conscious of themselves and yet remain in bondage. They need to attain the envisioned free self. The Ndaou people, therefore, need to take heed of Biko's advice and seek to emancipate themselves from the shackles that bind them and from a perpetual emulation and/or mimicking of the Westerners.

A quotation from Murphree (1969: 13) seems to be a plausible way of ending this study. The quote is based on a resumé of a statement made in London, 17 February 1962, by the leader of the largest Zimbabwean nationalist party [name not given], and recorded by Murphree: "We do not want to be Europeans; we want to be Africans. The Whites thought that they could destroy our African culture, but they failed; it has only gone underground. It is still there, and we shall resurrect it. We shall take from the European culture that which can help us, but we shall blend it with our African culture, and the end result will be African."

## **8.8 CONCLUSION**

The thesis represented an attempt to develop an in-depth understanding of the Ndaou people's perceptions and experiences on the connection between and the necessity for both the traditional and the Christian marriages in Chimanimani, Zimbabwe. Both the issues of 'the connection between' and 'the necessity for both' were explored in the thesis. On the whole, the thesis covered a wide range of issues. It gave the history of the SAGM, the historical and geographical background of the Ndaou people, as well

as the attitudes of the former towards the latter and vice versa. It was noted and emphasised that there is neither a theological nor a biblical basis for requiring Ndau Christians in Chimanimani to have church weddings after being married traditionally. In line with a postcolonial hybrid approach to the issue in question, the study suggests a merging of the two into one ceremony, most likely at the bride's home on the day *roora* is paid. Several other recommendations were also made including one for the legislators in Zimbabwe to provide for a rolling out of marriage certificates to all those that are traditionally married. The church was likewise challenged to be more responsive to its people's challenges and struggles.



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**ADDENDUM A**

**LETTER REQUESTING PARTICIPANT'S PARTICIPATION IN THE RESEARCH  
PROJECT**

**DEPARTMENT OF RELIGIOUS STUDIES AND ARABIC**

**UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA**

Dear ..... (Research Participant)

Research project on the relationship between Indigenous and Christian marriages among the Ndau of Chimanimani, Zimbabwe.

My name is Elijah Elijah Ngoweni Dube, and I am a Doctorate Student in the Department of Religious Studies and Arabic at the University of South Africa. As part of my studies I have to undertake a research project and for this reason I have decided to do an investigation into the perceptions and experiences of marriage among the Ndau people of Chimanimani, Zimbabwe. The reason for undertaking this research project is because so little is known about this topic.

Since you have personal experience about this subject, I regard you as an expert who can provide me with valuable information about this topic.

In this letter, I would also like to explain to you what your participation in this research project will involve (if you agree to participate).

Should you agree to participate in this research project, I would like to have one (1) interview (or focus group) with you at a time and place that would best suit you. This interview would not be longer than 90 minutes. If necessary, arrangements will be made with you for follow-up interviews. During the interview(s) the following questions will be directed to you:

- 1) Biographical questions
- 2) Questions on the topic being researched.
- 3) Questions on your experiences with regard to the issue(s) in question.



Given that I would like to give you my full attention during the interview(s), and in view of the fact that I might forget some of the valuable information that you share, I would like (with your permission) to record the interview(s) on tape. After the interview(s), this tape-recording will be written out word-for-word. When writing the interview out, all information that might identify you personally will be removed so that no one will be able to link you to any of the information that you have shared during the interview(s). The tape recording will then be erased. Some of the information that you have shared will be documented in a research report and nowhere will your name or any personal information be shared; this will make it impossible for anybody to identify you.

Please note that participation in the research is completely voluntary (you are free to participate or not participate). You are not forced in any way to take part in this research project. Your decision to participate, or not to participate, will not affect you in any way now or in the future.

If you agree to take part, you still have the right to change your mind at any time during the study and to withdraw from the study.

If I see that the information that you have shared left you feeling emotionally upset, or anxious, I am required to refer you to a counselor for debriefing or counseling (should you agree).

You have the right to ask questions concerning the study at any time. Should you have any questions or concerns about the study, please contact the following numbers: 0027 72 248 4908, 0027 84 309 8558 or 0027 12 429 3892 or e-mail [dubeeen@gmail.com](mailto:dubeeen@gmail.com).

If you do agree to participate in this study, I would like you to sign the consent form that follows.

Yours sincerely

Elijah E. N. Dube

Researcher

## ADDENDUM B

<b>Consent Form</b>
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I, \_\_\_\_\_, agree out of my free will to participate in this research topic: **Getting married twice: The relationship between Indigenous and Christian marriages among the Ndau of the Chimanimani area of Zimbabwe**, which focuses on the Ndau's perceptions of marriage, especially the relationship between traditional and Christian marriages.

I understand that the information that I will share will be used for research purposes only and that nowhere will my identity be made known in any research report/publication. I am also aware of the fact that I can withdraw at any time during the study without incurring any penalty.

\_\_\_\_\_

Signature of research participant

\_\_\_\_\_

Date

## **ADDENDUM C**

### **INTERVIEW GUIDE**

At the beginning of the interview all participants' biographical/demographic information will be obtained and the following questions will be asked:

- Gender?
- How old are you?
- What is your marital status?
- Are you affiliated to any church?

Questions relating to the research topic:

- What ways of traditional Ndau marriages do you know? (Ask the participant to give brief descriptions of each).
- What would you say is the most preferred traditional way of marriage?
- Why do you think some people have church weddings after getting married traditionally or culturally?
- What would you say is the relationship between traditional marriage rites and Christian weddings? Is there, in your observation, any superior-inferior relationship between the two?
- In your opinion, is traditional marriage good enough on its own without a church wedding?
- What do you think about the expenses associated with some if not most of the church weddings?
- What do you think about the double expense of having to pay for *roora* and for a church wedding afterwards?

Questions on your experiences with regard to the issue(s) in question

- How did you get married or how do you intend to get married? Why?
- What influenced or influences your decision?



## ADDENDUM D

### SOUTH AFRICA (SAGM) GENERAL MISSION HISTORY

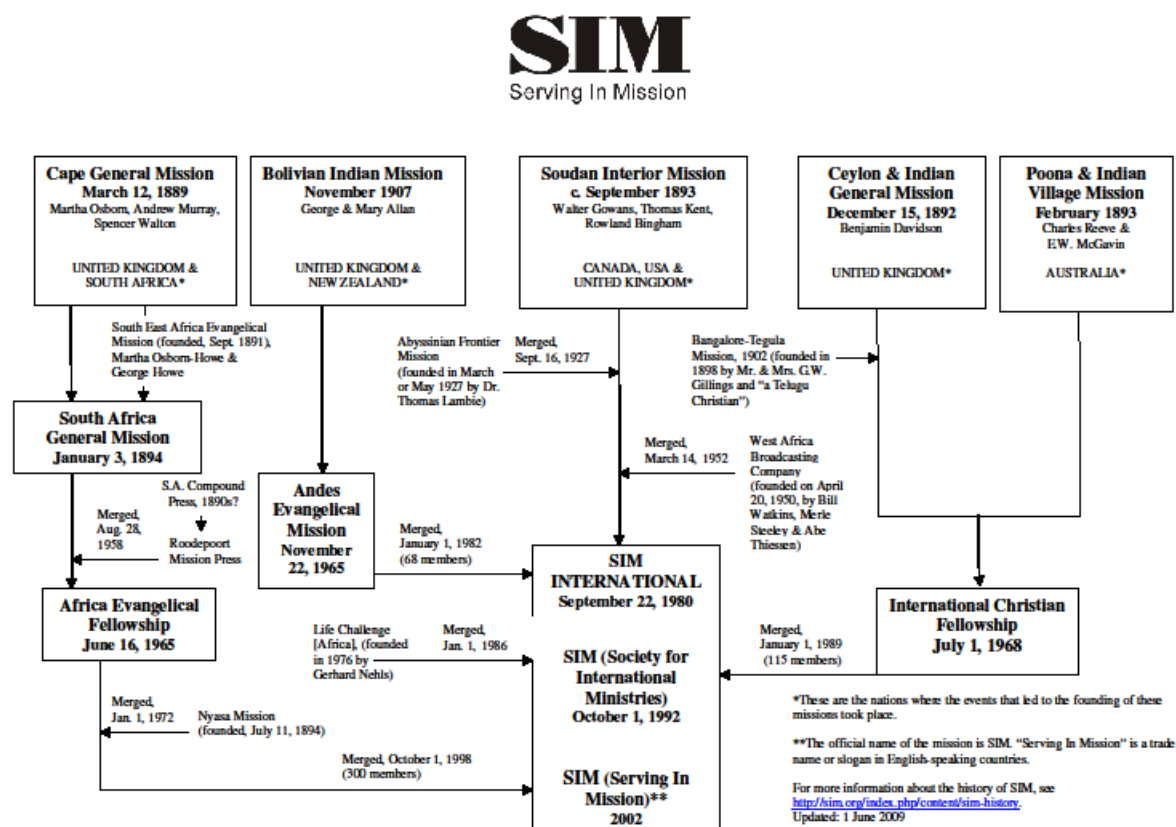


Chart obtained from Serving in Mission, <http://images.sim.org/pdfs/history/sim-history-chart.pdf> Access date 02/12/2015

## ADDENDUM E

### LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

# CERTIFICATE

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### TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

This is to certify that I have edited the following document for English style, language usage, logic and consistency; it is the responsibility of the author to accept or reject the suggested changes manually, and interact with the comments in order to finalise the text.

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Title: GETTING MARRIED TWICE: THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN INDIGENOUS  
AND CHRISTIAN MARRIAGES AMONG THE NDAU OF THE CHIMANIMANI  
AREA OF ZIMBABWE

Sincerely

DAVID LEVEY

Electronically signed

2017-06-13